under your care under your thumb

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/61940602.

Rating:
Explicit

Archive Warnings:
Rape/Non-Con, Underage Sex

Category:
M/M

Fandom:
Batman - All Media Types

Relationships:
Tim Drake/Jason Todd, Tim Drake/Dick Grayson, Tim Drake/Damian Wayne, Tim Drake/Bruce Wayne

Characters:
Tim Drake (DCU), Jason Todd, Dick Grayson, Damian Wayne, Bruce Wayne

Additional Tags:
Smut, Dom/sub Undertones, Rape/Non-con Elements, Omorashi, Bed-Wetting, Wetting, infantilization, Pseudo-Incest, Batcest | Batfamily Incest (DCU), Bottom Tim Drake (DCU), Hand Feeding, Loss of Control, no beta we die like jason todd, please be careful of the tags, Porn, Porn with Feelings, Plot What Plot/Porn Without Plot, Manipulation, Emotional Manipulation, Top Jason Todd, Top Dick Grayson, Top Damian Wayne, Top Bruce Wayne, Tim Drake Has a Vagina, Open to hearing about dead batteries, Pet Names, tim is lowkey having a breakdown, and his family is profiting, Humiliation, Non-Consensual Voyeurism, Voyeurism, Forced Feminization, Panties, Spanking, Massage, Bondage, Non-Consensual Drug Use

Language:
English

Stats:
Published: 2025-01-03 Updated: 2025-03-22 Words: 26,020
Chapters: 2/3

under your care under your thumb

by lovelysandlonelys

Summary

“Please let me up Dick I need to go so bad I’m about to- I can’t- I-I’ll let you guys look after me I promise, I promise please just let me up.”

“Oh, baby,” Dick cooed, one of his hands drifted down and pressed against Tim’s stomach making the ach and pressure on tim’s bladder increase in an instant. Tim let out a distressed squeak of surprise. “I know that you’ll be good for us, we just have to get you past this first hurdle.”

“Dick, please,” Tim pleaded, another slightly larger trickle of pee getting pressed out before Tim managed to stop the flow. It was painful to stop and the pressure on his bladder increased tenfold. “Dick I don’t want to make a mess, please? Please?” To Tim’s great shame and humiliation tears were welling up in his eyes, making his vision swim as he begged, because that’s what he was doing, begging Dick to let him go to the bathroom.

Alternatively: It's porn... but also kinda a character study but mostly porn. The bat family just wants their little Timmy to stay home for a while and have deranged and depraved ways of convincing him.

Notes

This is batcest porn!! Do not read if you do not want to read kinky, self indulgent, completely separated from cannon, porn! This is a lot inspired by dairyfarmer's various tim fics both on ao3 and on tumblr so if you like this make sure to check out their stuff.

Despite knowing that Tim is probably one of the most competent characters in the batfam I've always been enamored by his slight lack of a childhood and how the idea of not being independent is so scary to him. So scary that he would do almost anything (fake uncle) to not have proper supervision. So this aversion to being a dependent is being brought to an extreme in this fic, where all of

his family members want to baby him/control him.

I wasn't entirely sure what to tag, so if you have strong opinions about other tags that need to be added please let me know!

Be ready for completely inaccurate medical writing regarding recovery times and infections, it doesn't last that long though so not too much

See the end of the work for more notes

you can't hold it in forever

It starts because Tim decides to help young justice with a mission in the Congo jungle and he doesn't have a spleen. He, somewhat predictably, gets a scrape from a spike trap. A scrape that Tim would like to point out is not a hole in his organs like it could have been if he hadn't caught himself with his staff. Thank you very much. A scrape that nonetheless did not get any treatment aside from a salve made from herbs from a local village that did stave off infection… until Tim was trapped in the temple where the dragon princess was plotting to eat the sun and he only had so many antibiotics in his utility belt. Tim and the team managed to contain the princess and Tim, personally, managed not to pass out from an increasingly bad infection until after they stepped off the plane in San Francisco.

Tim spent one day with Kon in the med-bay until Dick arrived in an explosion of worried noises and poking finger stripes. He had an ungloved hand pushing up his bangs to feel his forehead within seconds while Kon watched on with an amused expression. Tim batted Dick's hands away with weak swats, the other man's hands felt like ice.

"Oh, Timmy," Dick sighed, "What happened?"

Tim rolled his eyes at Dick's distress. "I'm just fighting an infection Dick."

Dick set his hands on his hips, and Tim shot a look towards Kon who raised his hands in surrender and backed out of the room with a smirk quirked on his lips. "And why did you get an infection when I know you have special medicine you're supposed to take."

"We got trapped in an ancient dragon puzzle temple and I ran out of antibiotics," Tim shrugged as much as he could when his muscles screamed at him with every movement, the infection pressing exhaustion down onto his shoulders.

"You didn't pack more than usual for your trip?" Dick asked, and Tim was feeling distinctly patronized. He could feel his eyebrows crunching down into a dismayed expression that Dick would mistake for discomfort, he quickly smoothed over his expression.

"I did," Tim said, "We just ended up trapped for longer than anticipated, I know that we joke that I'm the best detective but I can't

see the future Dick."

Dick hummed, which Tim thought was slightly rude because it did not sound like a hum of agreement, it just sounded doubtful. Tim bit back the defensive snap back that was building in his throat. Dick was worried about him and came to check on him because he cared about Tim. Tim wasn't going to lash out at him for that, he was probably being more sensitive than usual because his skin felt like it was prickling and he was overheated and his head hurt.

"Thanks for checking in on me, Dick," Tim said, sucking in a deep breath through protesting lungs, "I appreciate it."

"I'm not checking in on you," Dick said, moving to grab a gauze pad from one of the clear glass jars that lined the mad-bay counter, "I'm taking you home, Bruce is worried about you. We all think It would be better if you recovered at the Manor."

Dick pressed the gauze pad to the IV on the back of Tim's hand and slid the needle out from under Tim's skin with practiced ease. Tim shivered at the feeling of Dick's cold hands and burrowed further under his blanket where he could. Tim swallowed around the lump in his throat.

"Are you sure? I- I haven't lived in the manor for a few years now, I would be totally fine staying here at the tower," Tim said.

"Well I wouldn't be fine with that," Dick said decisively, fingers fluttering around Tim's body, tucking the blanket around him in seemingly random places, "and neither is Bruce or Jason or Damian-"

Tim snorted.

"Hey he's come around on you a lot Tim-" Dick jumped to the little assassin's defense.

Tim rolled his eyes, "Since I've been gone, yeah, because he doesn't have to deal with me. As soon as we have to occupy the same space again he's going to be out for my blood."

"He hasn't tried to kill Jason even once since he moved back home!" Dick said, shoving an arm under Tim's knees and lower back and heaving him, alongside his blanket, up against his chest in a princess carry with one strong lift. Tim squeaks, not expecting the lift, and holds himself stiff in Dick's arms. Dick maneuvers Tim so that his face is resting on his shoulder.

Tim took a moment to recover, head spinning at the sudden movement, “Uhm- but he's always liked Jason more than he’s liked me anyway that’s-” Tim was feeling sleepy, the subtle rocking moment of Dick’s steps towards the elevator did not mix well with the fact that Tim had already been awake for a few hours that day. “That’s not an accurate comparison that can be used as- as evidence to support your hypothesis,” Tim mumbled.

Dick chuckled, and Tim felt the rumble against his cheek as he fell back asleep.

When he woke again he was settled in his old bed in the manor, a heavy comforter tucked around him, leaving only one arm out to be connected to the IV of antibiotics he needed to take until the infection left the danger zone. His ceiling fan was spinning lazily, and Tim's mouth was dry as a bone. Tim leveraged himself up with his elbows, a fight with the plush mattress and mountain of pillows surrounding him. The pillows were clearly Dick’s work, there was even a stuffed bear tucked into the corner of his bed that pressed against the wall.

As he fought to get into a sitting position two warm hands grabbed his upper arms and pulled him into place against the pillows propped against the headboard. Tim noticed halfheartedly that he wasn’t wearing the sweats that he had on in the tower. He had a pair of old-school pajamas on, with a collar, and buttons, and pastel blue Nightwing emblems in a repeating pattern. Tim internally grumbled, Dick’s sense of humor and ego knew no bounds. The IV pole stood proudly in front of his side table where a glass of water with a blue straw tucked into it enticed him.

Tim reached for it, but his fingers hadn’t even left the edge of the bed before Jason was scoffing. “Take if fucking easy Timbit,” Jason said gruffly, the hand not grabbing the glass of water held Tim’s shoulder in place against the pillows. The straw bumped against Tim’s lips and Tim blinked and tried to drag his mind out of the sleepy gunk clinging to it.

Jason sighed. The flat palm against Tim’s shoulder briefly pressed harder as if reminding Tim to stay in place before it migrated up to cup Tim’s jaw. Jason’s calloused palm dragged over the cotton pajamas and dislodged the collar from Tim’s neck until Jason’s fingers could rest comfortably over the scar that he had left Tim with after their first encounter.

“Open,” Jason rumbled, thumbing at Tim’s bottom lip with his thumb

and bumping the straw against Tim's mouth again. Tim remembered that he was thirsty and followed Jason's instructions, closing his lips around the straw and sucking up what must have been at least half of the water in the glass.

"There you go," Jason said when Tim released the straw, "Thirsty, huh, Timbers?" Jason retreated back to his chair, settling into the cushioned armchair that's found its way into his room with his legs spread wide and arms relaxed over the armrests. Jason was a sprawler, had always been the kind of person to take up the amount of space that he thought he deserved. Tim could recall an endless number of times that he had been squished between the couch arm rest and Jason's muscular bulk during family movie nights, a heavy leather clad arm wrapped around his shoulders so that Tim's 'boney ass shoulders' didn't dig into Jason's bicep.

Tim felt more awake after drinking a bit of water and sitting up. The removal of Jason's hands, overly hot and pressing, coupled with the chill of the air kicked around by the fan brought Tim back to reality.

"Yeah," Tim answered, his voice scratchy with sleep and sickness "What time- how long was I out?"

"You woke up just in time for dinner," Jason told him, "Dickie brought you home yesterday and you slept through that entire afternoon and this morning. People have been in and out monitoring your condition and Alfred got sick of us jostling you around by sitting on the bed so," Jason twisted his hand in a sarcastically flamboyant arc over the plush armchair, "me and B dragged this in here."

"You guys don't need to watch me," Tim said, he went to cross his arms but paused when the IV started to pull on his hand. Tim very carefully set his hands down on the top of the covers over his thighs, cleared his throat when he noticed Jason was watching him. "I was going to stay in San Francisco…"

Jason rolled his eyes, a wide grin on his face. "As if we would let you do that. You'll have to suck it up and let Dickie boy and B smother you while you recover from your little scratch."

Tim scowled, "I almost got sepsis," he said flatly.

"All the more reason for you to whinge and whine in the comfort of your own bed," Jason teased, standing up and stretching his arms over his head.

“My bed is in my apartment in Gotham.”

“Your bed is here,” Jason said dismissively, “don’t think for a second we won’t strap you down if we have to, Timbit.” Tim shivered at the warning in Jason’s voice, and gave a small nod of acquiescence. Jason’s smile returned, and he clapped Tim on the shoulder roughly, “Good boy, come have dinner.”

Jason strolled out of the room, the door left open for Tim to follow him. Tim peeled back the covers so that there was a triangle of space the blankets didn’t cover that he could slip out of and then back into once dinner was over. His feet were covered with fluffy white socks and when they settled on the hardwood floor Tim could feel the rubber dots on the bottom ensuring that he wouldn’t slip. It was thoughtful and Tim wanted to have gratitude but he also felt baby-ish. Cotton pajamas and straws and socks with grippies and a teddy bear…

Tim didn’t like it. It made him feel 13 again, staying the night at the manor for the first time and being surrounded by things that he didn’t have at home, that his father had thrown away or broken in a fit of rage. At 13, and now, he felt like he couldn’t touch, couldn't mess with any of the carefully placed trinkets and toys or stain any of the soft blankets or clothes that were stocked in his size. He didn’t need any of that, he didn't need to be coddled or taken care of. At 13 and at 22 he was a support, not one to be supported.

His chest felt tight, not just because he was having some trouble breathing with the fever that was still running rampant through his body, but because of his growing discomfort. Tim got up off of the bed slowly and contemplated changing, after carefully removing the IV. He could dig through the drawers of his long abandoned dresser for an old scratchy pair of sweatpants and an oversized sweater to replace the soft and overly luxurious pajamas, leave the childish comforts in the past where they belonged.

Before he could act on those thoughts, looking at the dresser in contemplation and running a hand through his hair, there was a knock of knuckles against the door. Tim’s head jerked towards the doorway to find Damian hovering in the doorway, a glare on his face as it always was.

“Dinner will get cold,” Damian said quietly. His eyes drifted up and down Tim’s body before flickering around the rest of the room, catching on the glass of water. “You should bring your water so that Pennyworth does not have to come and fetch it.”

Tim nodded. He plucked the glass off of the nightstand and was surprised to find Damian still standing in the hallway when he turned back around. They headed for the stairs together.

Damian at 16 was already taller and broader than Tim, their shoulders brushed and Tim shuffled to the side knowing that the contact wasn't purposeful or pointed like it used to be. Damian just took up more space in comparison to Tim, something that the younger boy had lorded over Tim at every opportunity when it first began, though as he matured the gloating decreased until only the occasional elbow found its resting place on his shoulder during patrol.

It was, annoying, to be outgrown by the youngest member of the family but inevitable. Tim's mother had been tiny and his father slim. Bruce Wayne was not a small man, and Damian's training regime from a young age basically guaranteed that he would pack on muscle like the world was ending.

While Tim was lost in thought, Damian reached over and pushed up on the bottom of the water glass in Tim's hand. Tim lifted his hand with the gentle press automatically and glanced over at Damian inquisitively. The other boy's eyes were trained on the glass.

"You need to maintain a sufficient level of hydration while recovering," Damian said stiffly, overly formal in a way he rarely was now as a teenager, using decorum to navigate uncomfortable situations.

When the glass was at mouth height Tim obligingly took the straw into his mouth and sucked down more of the water as they walked. It was rare for Damian to show care for Tim, or for anyone, without a barb being attached. Tim had never held a grudge against Damian for his younger self's overly violent tendencies. It was the least he could do to indulge the boy.

When they reached the entryway to the kitchen Damian took the glass and set it in the sink while Dick waved Tim into the seat next to him.

Dinner was delicious as always and passed quickly. Tim was rapidly getting tired, the symptoms of his infection growing more prominent as time passed. Tim listened more than he talked. Jason told raunchy stories about his most recent check in with his 'girls', as he called the working girls he looked after in Crime Alley, that even had Bruce cracking a smile. Dick explained that he had taken time off from the Titans to spend some time in Gotham. Damian covertly complained

about his trigonometry teacher in a way that was almost like a normal teenager.

Bruce refilled Tim's glass every time he emptied it. Once even reaching over to pour his own drink into Tim's cup while Tim protested weakly and Dick cackled.

"You need fluids, Tim," Bruce said firmly.

Dick walked with Tim back to his room after dinner, hopping along energetically while Jason and Damian peeled off to their own rooms. Tim's was deeper in the family wing, a result of a young grieving child not wanting to be close to his dead hero's mausoleum of a bedroom.

The IV was replaced with a bottle of Tim's normal pills on his bedside table with another glass of water. Tim made a note in his head to remember to take them in the morning, a sentiment echoed by Dick when he noticed the bottle.

Dick insisted on tucking Tim into bed, smoothing his hair from his face to kiss his forehead like Tim was a sick child. It was as Dick's lips left his skin that Tim realized he had to go to the bathroom like… really badly actually. Dick closed the door behind him and Tim peeled the covers back and jumped out of bed only for Dick to re-open the door.

"Tim," Dick said, eyes narrowed, "I swear to god if you're looking for your computer…"

Tim let out a surprised laugh. "No, no," Tim assured him, "I just need to use the bathroom sorry, that, uh, totally sounds like something I would do."

Instead of laughing and retreating Dick stepped deeper into Tim's room, eyebrows furrowed. "Timmy, you need bed rest," Dick said, crossing Tim's room quickly until he had his hands on Tim's shoulders. Tim blinked. "Lay back down, baby, you shouldn't exert yourself too much, you're still getting over your fever."

"I-" Tim's mind was blank, he was mentally grasping at straws. "Dick I'm just going to the bathroom, I'll get right back in bed," Tim reassured him.

Dick's grip on his shoulders tightened and before Tim realized what was going on his head was on the pillow, back pressed down firmly to the mattress by Dick's hands. His feet were slightly off to the side,

running into Dick's legs where he stood looming over Tim. Tim's bladder twinged.

"Dick, what are you doing?" Tim's voice was a whisper. He brought his feet up to the bed and bent his knees to get his feet underneath himself. Half planning on planting his feet into Dick's stomach if he didn't let Tim get to a toilet soon.

"You need to relax, Timmy," Dick said, as if he was scolding Tim for trying to go to the gym instead of his en suite. "You can't be moving around too much, you need to stay in bed and let us take care of you."

Tim spluttered, incredulity replacing his shock, "Dick what the fuck are you talking about right now?" Tim's voice was raising in volume, "I'm just trying to go pee, you have to let me up." Tim bucked up against Dick's hold on his shoulders and planted his feet into Dick's stomach, twisting awkwardly so that his feet could reach a good surface area, and pushing against Dick's solid stance.

But Tim was weak and feverish and small. Dick wasn't as large as the other members of their family but he was still much bigger than Tim, his hands dwarfed Tim's shoulders. Dick didn't so much as flinch as Tim pushed against his abdomen and Tim thought he saw Dick's lips twitch upward in amusement before the serious expression took over his face once again.

"I don't have to do anything," Dick said, "I'm the one looking after you, Timmy, I get to decide what's best for you right now."

"Dick," Tim's legs gave up, his breath labored with the exertion of trying to fight off a vigilante while battling an infection at the same time. He wet his lips, "Dick, please, I-" a flush that wasn't related to the fever spread across his cheeks and neck, "I really need to go."

Dick hummed, but didn't move. Tim caught movement out of the corner of his eye and flinched to see Bruce, Jason, and Damian. Jason was lounging against the wall just inside the room, Bruce was in the doorway and Damian was sitting at Tim's desk chair, leaning forwards towards Tim.

"What's going on?" Tim blurted out, squirming against the sheets as his bladder pulsed again. Tim squeezed his thighs together to stave off the feeling that was quickly becoming overwhelming.

Dick looked over his shoulder where Tim's eyes had landed before focusing back on Tim. "They're just here for moral support, baby."

“Moral support for what?” Tim spat out, vacillating wildly between desperate and confused and angry and cornered. Why was Dick refusing to let him get up? Why was the rest of the family keeping-keeping vigil on the outskirts of his room? Tim just needed to pee.

“For letting go, Timmy,” Dick said, his thumbs rubbing soothing circles into Tim’s shoulders where he was holding Tim down. “You need to let yourself relax and let us take care of you while you get better. You have to let go.”

As if in response to Dick’s cajoling, Tim’s bladder was starting to reach unbearable levels of strain. Every breath, every twitch was another mark against his control over his own body. His entire lower half felt like it was pulsing in time to Tim’s desperation for release.

“Please,” Tim was back to despair, the anger evaporating as he felt a small trickle of pee leak out of him before he clenched down, the warm liquid soaking quickly into his underwear. “Please let me up Dick I need to go so bad I’m about to- I can’t- I- I’ll let you guys look after me I promise, I promise please just let me up.”

“Oh, baby,” Dick cooed, one of his hands drifted down and pressed against Tim’s stomach making the ache and pressure on Tim’s bladder increase in an instant. Tim let out a distressed squeak of surprise. “I know that you’ll be good for us, we just have to get you past this first hurdle.”

“Dick, please,” Tim pleaded, another slightly larger trickle of pee getting pressed out before Tim managed to stop the flow. It was painful to stop and the pressure on his bladder increased tenfold. “Dick I don’t want to make a mess, please? Please?” To Tim’s great shame and humiliation tears were welling up in his eyes, making his vision swim as he begged, because that’s what he was doing, begging Dick to let him go to the bathroom.

“I’m sorry, baby,” Dick said, not sounding sorry at all, hand pressing harder against Tim’s stomach, “It’s okay to make a mess, sweetheart. We’ll still love you if you make a mess, we’ll even pick up after you Timmy. We want to look after you.”

Tim whimpered.

He couldn’t hold it in much longer, he had needed to go really bad when he got out of bed and now minutes had passed with no relief and he was- he was crying and shaking and he didn’t feel good and no one was letting him up. Warm tears were slipping down his cheeks

and he could barely see Dick through the water clouding his vision. Sniffles and whimpers were quickly becoming hiccuping sobs and Tim hadn't even done the thing he was sobbing over.

Blearily he could hear talking in the background as the pressure on his bladder increased.

"We can try again another time Dickie, he's crying," Jason's low pitched voice, getting closer as he pushed off the wall.

"I concur, Grayson, Timothy clearly needs a gentler hand this-"

Damian was cut off by Bruce, closer than before, hovering over Dick's shoulders where Tim could see his outline against the ceiling. "Watch."

And Tim's resistance broke. The relief wasn't instant. It felt like the pressure took horrible painful, wet seconds to actually go down as piss soaked into Tim's underwear and then his white and baby blue cotton pajama pants, no doubt being stained irreparably with pale yellow, and then the sheets. God the sheets Tim would have to change them but he was already so tired and what if it got on the mattress that would be a whole other issue, Alfred would be disgusted, the rest of his family was probably disguised, watching Tim wet himself in front of them while he sobbed, unable to fight off one person who was now barely holding Tim in place.

Tim reached up to cover his face with his hands, sobs shaking his body as the liquid just kept coming out of him. Hot and sticking his nice pajamas to his skin. The relief was the worst part. Even as his shame and humiliation and disgust grew with each moment that passed his relief only rose and rose. The pressure was leaving him and his lower half no longer felt like it was tied to his bladder's painful pulsing.

When Tim finished the only sound in the room was Tim's crying. As the pee cooled off the liquid became cold and tacky and sticky where it touched him. Once his sobs calmed down Tim was terrified to remove his hands from over his eyes. He was frozen solid and growing colder and more uncomfortable with every passing second but he knew what he must look like and he knew that his entire family, the people that he admired and respected and loved, were all looking down on his mess.

A crisp tongue click broke the silence and Tim flinched back into his pillow. Dick's hands were gone seconds later and dry, warm, fingers

were wrapped around Tim's wrists, pulling his hands away from his drenched face and then using that grip to pull Tim up and out of the wet bed.

"Come along Timothy," Damian said, dragging Tim forward with his grip on one wrist the other dropped as he turned to guide Tim. "Let's get you cleaned up."

Tim stumbled after him blindly and ungracefully. He felt off kilter, off balance in every way possible. All he could do was nod even though he knew that Damian wouldn't see it since he was facing the younger boy's broad shoulders as he pulled Tim towards his own bedroom.

In moments Tim was standing in Damian's shower and being guided to sit down on the shower stool in the stall. Tim didn't know what to do with his hands, he couldn't rest them in his lap because… it was sticky with his piss. He was caught, holding them out and away from his body like a confused child would when they got messy at arts and crafts.

A finger hooked under Tim's chin and his eyes met Damian's green ones. The back of his other hand pressed against Tim's forehead and then after a few seconds of contact moved to the juncture of his neck.

"Your fever has broken," Damian said, taking his hand away, he took a step back and Tim felt like he could breathe again. "You must undress to clean off, Timothy," Damian pointed out after a few moments passed where Tim did nothing but shiver and blink at him.

Tim nodded and his hands raised without thought to the buttons of his pajama top. He paused. "Could-" Tim swallowed, "Could you leave the room?"

Damian's expression morphed seamlessly from serious to smug. Tim automatically braced, his shoulders tensing. Damian raised an eyebrow at Tim and it felt like falling. Dick had pulled the rug out from under him and there was a trapdoor that he was still tumbling through, unable to reach solid ground to regroup on. Everyone was acting so strange and uncharacteristic. Tim felt like he needed to run the procedures for alternate realities.

"I could," Damian shrugged.

"Will you leave the room?" Tim asked, not even annoyed at the knit picking at his language, too desperate for some time alone to gather himself.

“Disrobe first,” Damian said, “So that I can put your clothes in the wash and bring you new ones.”

Tim’s flush was intense and all consuming. He did not want to do that, but Tim and Damian had fought each other for ages and he could tell from the youngest expression that he would not be letting this ‘request’ go. Tim’s fingers were shaking where they were still set against the smooth plastic of his first shirt button.

“Can’t I just leave them for you to swap out?” Time voice was shaking too, small tremors that he tried and failed to suppress.

“You’re shaking,” Damian observed.

Tim nodded and opened his mouth, half formed arguments about feeling scared and overwhelmed and wanting privacy on the tip of his tongue.

“All the more reason for you to get out of those wet clothes,” Damian said, voice soft like he was talking to a spooked kitten.

Tim bristled. “Exactly, so if you would just leave so that I can do that, that would be great, Damian.”

Damian sighed, apparently sensing that Tim would not budge. “Fine.”

Tim exhaled, releasing tension as soon as the door clicked closed behind Damian. Tim shed his clothes in a flurry of motion, half expecting the door to open while he was in the middle of leaning over to get his socks off. He stumbled out of the shower stall to shed the rest of his clothes, in a pile but paused once his legs were bare.

Tim’s eyes were caught on the damp pool of fabric at his feet. Instead of the boxer briefs that he had rightfully assumed he had been wearing since that’s what he remembered sliding up his legs the last time he got dressed, there was a pair of cotton panties nestled within the pajama pants. They had a scalloped waistband.

Tim shivered and slammed his hand into the faucet handle, cranking it all the way to hot and then getting in before the water had time to heat up. Shivers wracked his frame as the ice cold water caressed his skin but even as he leaned away from the chilly stream it was worth the feeling of his mess being washed away. Tim dragged his hand across the skin of his thighs and between his legs, pressing up briefly with his fingertips to drag them through his folds and aid in the flow of water over the area.

The shower was empty except for three bottles on the built-in shelf in the wall. Tim found this suspicious because the last time he used Damian's shower while Jason used his after a mishap with soup in the kitchen, the shower shelves and the seat that Tim had just been perched on had been full to bursting with different scrubs and exotic shampoos and conditioners that had been gifted to him by his mother. That now, the bathroom was almost barren, seemed like an impossible coincidence.

Clicking the top of one of the bottles Tim sniffed delicately. Orange blossoms and vanilla. Citrus and sweetness. Tim used to have a shampoo like this in high school, well it wasn't his, it was some french thing that his mother had picked up that had glitter in it and swirled around orange and cream when you shook the bottle. Tim used it for most of his freshman year because he had run out of the three for one stuff that Mrs. Mac picked up for him and figured his mother wouldn't notice since she was over 10,000 miles away.

This shampoo was eerily similar. As it poured over Tim's hand it shimmered in the artificial light that shone down on him from the fixture in the center of the shower stall. The porcelain of the bathtub looked white as bone in comparison to the orange tinted bubbles that washed down the drain. Tim scratched at his scalp with nicely rounded nails and when the water ran clear he could still smell the clean and sugary scent of lemon zest and white flowers and vanilla and whipped cream and candied orange rind.

When he turned off the water Tim felt more grounded. Not as warm or weighed down as he had before. He broke out into goosebumps when his hand breached the steamy cocoon of warmth that the shower curtain created. The wall hooks were empty but a towel was pushed into his hand. Tim's goosebumps did not go away even as he rubbed the towel over his slick limbs, drying off and trying to gather the remnants of warmth in the air.

Tim wrapped the towel around his shoulders before he opened the curtains. Damian stood on the other side. Tim cast his eyes towards where he had discarded his sodden clothes. The floor was clean and dry. Damian held a bundle of fabric in his arms and was leaning against the bathroom counter with his ankles crossed.

The towel was large enough that it completely covered Tim even when he had it wrapped around him like a child would. Tim felt small again, clear headed and on solid ground but small. Tiny, compared to the fluffy towel that dwarfed his shoulders and the looming form of

Damian across the tile.

“I thought you were going to leave the clothes,” Tim said, stepping fully out of the bathtub, pulling the shower curtains behind him.

The mirror was fogged behind Damian and so when he turned his head there was this odd kind of hallowed effect from light reflecting off of steamed glass. A water droplet dripped from Tim’s hair onto his cheek.

“Who would help you dress then?” Damian said, “You are still weak with sickness, and without good rest it is only expected that someone should aid you.”

“I know that you’re just trying to help,” Tim could understand the impulse, he was often underfoot when he first started as Robin. He got in Alfred’s way because he couldn't stay out of it when Bruce got injured. Tim was injured, it was the first chance Damian had gotten in a while to show he cared, that he didn’t want Tim dead anymore. “But I’m really okay on my own Damian, I know I just… but I’m an adult I can dress myself, I’ll be fine.”

Damian shook his head. Then he said something Tim had never heard from him before, “Please,” He said, and Tim felt all his reservations melting away, swirling down the drain with the soap. “Just let me do this? We’ve all been very worried about you Timothy.”

When Damian took a step away from the counter he left the clothes behind him. “Please,” he repeated. Tim felt like he was looking at a ten year old again, a kid who wanted to fit in, who needed to prove himself. Tim always got the short end of the stick when it came to Damian but he couldn’t begrudge the younger boy because the world owed Damian a lot for what it had put him through the first ten years of his life. Therefore Tim sometimes owed him a lot.

Damian saying please meant that he wanted to help Tim a hell of a lot and in that moment, steam from the shower still cooling in the air around him, Tim felt that he owed it to Damian to play along for a moment. Just a moment, he told himself.

Tim nodded, a small motion in answer to a small plea.

Damian’s smile showed all of his teeth. He leaned back against the counter and hopped up onto it, spread his legs wide and motioned between them while he twisted to dig at the pile of clothes he had brought with him. When he glanced up and Tim had not moved he

nodded his head again towards the space in front of him and Tim took a halting step forward.

And then another and another, his hand tightening on the towel, until Damian twisted back to face him, a pair of underwear spread between his fingers, held open for Tim to step into. Tim swallowed, held the towel tighter around him for a moment before dropping it and taking the final steps towards Damian.

He put one hand on the other boy's shoulder to steady himself. He had to step high, even with Damian leaning down to hold the underwear open as low as he could go. One foot and then the other. Tim kept his eyes on the green cotton of Damian's t-shirt, his forehead on the other's shoulder as the cotton panties were dragged up his thighs to settle on his hips and cradle his cunt. Damian's fingers stroked the skin under the waistband for a moment, turned his nose to Tim's wet hair and inhaled.

"That's nice," Damian said, "I knew that a flowering fruit tree would compliment you. Beautiful and sustenance providing in equal measure."

Damian slid his hand to the small of Tim's back and tugged him deeper into the circle of his arms and legs. Tim lifted his head and saw that there was a wet patch on Damian's shirt where the water from his hair had sunk in. Damian leaned back and brought up a pair of pants that he pressed into Tim's hands while he worked on unbuttoning a pajama top that was similar in style to the one Tim had minutes ago shucked off onto the tile floor.

Tim pulled the pajama bottoms on, red flannel with black checkerboard stripes, and felt fabric settle around his shoulders. When Tim straightened up Damian smoothed his hands over Tim's shoulder's until his fingers stopped at the first button hole.

Damian did the buttons up on Tim's new pajama shirt one by one and when he reached the bottom he tied the string of the pajama pants in a neat little bow. Tim let out a deep breath. Damian took a towel off of the rack by the sink and started squeezing water out of Tim's hair.

"Pretty," Damian breathed quietly, into the silence, Tim could barely hear him through the towel that pressed against his ears, "so pretty for me. You have such fine bone structure Timothy."

Fingers moved from the towel to his cheekbone and wiped away some fallen water there, before the towel was tossed aside and hands settled

firmly on Tim's shoulders. "Much better," Damian hummed. Tim once again felt like a small kitten, wrongfully pulling sounds of comfort and pity from somewhere deep inside of Damian that the assassins hadn't managed to snuff out.

"Let us get you to bed," Damian said, maneuvering Tim so that he could drop from the counter without landing right on top of the shorter boy. Tim nodded. The walk back to his bedroom was quiet. His bed was made up with new sheets but the room was empty and it was dark when Damian flicked the light off. Tim fell asleep quickly.

*

Morning came much too quickly. The light of day felt much too bright where it wiggled through the blinds and pressed itself against Tim's eyelids. A hand knocked much too harshly and Tim groaned. He had only been awake for a few moments, long enough to dry swallow his pills with a distrustful look at the water glass, feelings from last night flickering at his temples while Tim tried to ignore the mixed up emotions stirring inside him.

"C'mon Timbit, I know last night was rough but Alfie made your favorite for breakfast," the thing was that Jason sounded so incredibly normal through the wooden door frame. He sounded like Tim's rough night was because of a long patrol or a lead that fell through and not his older brother holding him down and watching him piss himself.

"I'm not hungry," Tim called back, turning so that his back was to the doorway, fingers clenched tightly in the covers. The stuffed bear met his gaze and Tim pointedly redirected his eyes to the paint.

"Bullshit," Jason crowed, another round of knocking following the shout, "It's pancakes Timmy get your ass out of bed! Damian told us your fever broke so you don't have an excuse anymore."

"Five more minutes, Jay," Tim shouted, curling tighter around the blankets, kicking his feet so that they were tucked on top of the blanket. He hadn't been given new socks after his shower and his toes felt like ice.

Tim squeezed his eyes shut, only for them to pop back open at the sound of his door creaking on its hinges behind him. He twisted around in bed, the sheets tangling up between his legs as his eyes landed on Jason's wide grin, eyes sparkling bright green in the sunlight, canine teeth showing and sharpened from the pit.

“Jason,” Tim said, a warning in his voice, trying to get traction under his feet but slipping on the blankets, unable to rise to a sitting position before Jason was upon him, “Jason!” Tim yelped as Jason’s arms dug underneath him and hoisted him up. “I am not in the mood for this,” Tim growled, twisting in Jason’s grip and jabbing an elbow back into the larger man’s abdomen.

“Oof, Timmy, ow, keep your pointy bits to yourself please,” Jason requested, even as he grappled with Tim’s attacking arms to hold them tight against Tim’s body. Tim kicked out with his legs, decided he would rather be dropped than carried. “Okay you asked for it,” Jason said, with nothing but humor in his voice even as Tim’s struggles ratcheted up to vigilante level squirms.

Tim aimed a jab at Jason’s throat just as the support behind his back disappeared and he swung upside down from the hold on his legs. Tim tensed his abdomen and curled upward only for Jason to jerk the arm he had Tim’s leg in a hold around and upset his balance. Tim reached upward but couldn’t get at Jason’s arm and a dick shot seemed too cruel to pull before noon. So Tim hung upside down and grumbled under his breath as he was swayed towards the dining room, getting dizzy the longer he let the blood go to his head.

“Why’s Timmy upside down?” Dick asked when they crossed the threshold to the kitchen.

“Because he was putting up a fuss about coming to breakfast,” Jason answered, lowering Tim to the ground slowly so that Tim could get his hand underneath himself. The hardwood was cool and refreshing and infuriating. Tim clambered to his feet quickly, dodging a grasping hand angled in his direction from Dick. Fingertips brushed his sleeve and Tim threw himself back against the wall.

Dick pouted at him, Jason raised an eyebrow as he settled down into the chair across from Dick at the dining table. Tim shifted against the wall, taking a small step away from Dick and pressing himself closer to the wall. His hands came together in front of him and he ran the nail of his pointer finger under the thumb of his opposite hand, a nervous habit he hadn’t indulged in in front of people in years. He stilled his hands almost immediately after the first scrape but Dick’s eyebrows had already furrowed.

Dick sometimes had an unnerving similarity to Tim’s mother, he said the same things as her, “Timmy when did you start picking at your fingers again? You’re gonna ruin your hands, honey,” for different

reasons. Tim's mother would be taking a jab at Tim's behavior, Dick was legitimately worried that Tim was engaging in self harming behavior. He was dramatic, but well meaning.

Tim abruptly remembered Dick hovering over him last night and amended that thought. He was usually well meaning, Tim didn't know what to make of the incident last night. He would need to examine more evidence to come to some kind of conclusion. Not… that he really wanted to do any evidence gathering.

"I'm not," Tim huffed and sat down at the last open spot next to Dick, "I'm not picking at my fingers again it's fine." Tim straightened the fork at his place setting.

Dick grabbed the hand nearest to him and pulled it up towards his face, nearly crossing his eyes to examine Tim's nail beds. Damian snorted across from them and took a sip of his orange juice. "It appears Tim is telling the truth," Dick announced to the table, nodding seriously and keeping hold of Tim's hand, twining their fingers together before setting them on top of the table.

Tim's fingers spasmed in Dick's hold before he calmed himself enough to hold still. Bruce's newspaper crinkled as he turned the page. When Tim glanced up at him it seemed Bruce was repressing an amused smile. Dick's thumb moved up and down in a soothing motion.

"Thank god Timbit isn't tearing up his own hands," Jason said sarcastically, "Did you take your pills this morning?"

"Yeah, right before you came in and dragged me out of bed. I thought you guys wanted me to rest…" Tim grumbled, rubbing at his eyes with his free hand.

"You need sustenance, Timothy," Damian replied easily, "You cannot wither away in bed just because you do not have a case to drag you into investigative work."

Tim glared at Damian.

Alfred knocked on the frame of the doorway that led to the Kitchen to get their attention. "Breakfast is about to be served," Alfred said, "so please end any petty squabbles before I return with the serving platters."

Everyone straightened up in their seats while Tim relaxed against his. He gently extracted his hand from Dick's and scooted forward in his

chair. Alfred appeared a few moments later with a silver tray piled high with steaming pancakes.

“Master Timothy gets the first grab,” Alfred said, winking at Tim, as he laid down the tray on the table. He came back with a small cart and placed some bowls of cut fruits and berries on the table alongside platters of bacon and sausages, roasted russet potatoes, scrambled eggs with melted cheese on top, carafes with different syrups, and a small plate of whipped butter in a nicely balanced configuration.

Because Alfred’s word was law, Tim got the first pick of the spread on the table. He piled his plate high and sat back to watch the others descend on Alfred’s feast with vigor. Alfred placed a glass of milk on the table in front of Tim, right next to a condensating glass of water, before leaving for the kitchen. Alfred was the type of person who firmly believed that milk had restorative properties and retroactively strengthened bones.

Tim was spreading butter onto his pancakes when Bruce cleared his throat, cutting through an argument between Jason and Dick over the crispiest piece of bacon. “How are you feeling Tim?” Bruce rumbled.

“Alright,” Tim said, “I’m not experiencing any more symptoms of an aggravated infection.”

“Good.”

“Good,” Jason mocked, lowering his voice to a gravely impression of Bruce. Dick let out a surprised laugh that sounded almost like a squawk before he slapped a hand over his mouth.

Bruce turned his head slowly to level a dry glare at Jason, and then returned to his newspaper.

Tim finished spreading his butter and speared a triangle of pancake on his fork, which was halfway to his mouth when Dick snatched the utensil out of his hand.

Tim blinked at his empty hand before deciding that he didn’t want to deal with whatever Dick was trying to accomplish with this action. He was barely halfway through reaching to pick up a piece of bacon when nimble fingers hooked over the lip of Tim’s plate and it was dragged off of Tim’s place mat and towards Dick.

Tim, now thoroughly annoyed and hungry, sent an incredulous look at Jason and Damian across the table. He found no sympathy, Jason had

a hand over his mouth suppressing a laugh and Damian sported his usual glare as he poured syrup on his neat stack of pancakes.

Dick held Tim's fork up and held it next to Tim's cheek until Tim turned towards him, at which point Dick gently pressed part of the pancake speared on the end of the fork to Tim's lips. Bruce, over Dick's shoulders, had set down his newspaper and picked up his own fork. Tim knew that Bruce was trying to look like he wasn't watching his first Robin's antics but he was failing. Tim kept his mouth closed and leaned back in his chair until he felt he was a safe distance away.

"What are you doing?" Tim asked, he had that wrong footed feeling again. Like everyone else in the room knew what was going on except for him, like there was a mission objective that Tim hadn't been filled in on.

Dick gave Tim a sunny smile. "Feeding my sweetest baby brother!" Dick said, lifting the fork, he painted an exaggerated frown over his lips, though his eyes were still sparkling with mischief and happiness. "Aren't you hungry, Timmy?"

"Yeah," Tim said, hand coming up to grapple his stolen utensils from Dick's grip, "and I would appreciate the chance to eat my breakfast, on my own."

Dick heaved out an exaggerated sigh and leaned away from Tim, lifting the fork above his head and putting the back of his other hand against his forehead. "Timmy, pleeeeeease? I haven't gotten to do proper big brother stuff in so looooong."

Tim's scowl deepened, he was sure he was approaching Damian levels of facial hostility. "You never hand fed any of us, Dick."

Dick's expression screwed up into a pout, he dragged Tim's plate another inch closer to him. Tim sent a beseeching look towards Bruce, who had forgotten to pretend at inattention through Dick's performance.

Bruce licked his lips before he spoke. "Tim," and Tim had a bad feeling at that, "Just let your brother feed you, he only wants to make sure you eat enough while you're recovering."

Tim's jaw went slack in surprise. Was Bruce joking? Was today the day he developed a sense of humor? Why had nothing gone the way Tim expected since he had gotten home?

Dick popped up in joy and shifted his chair so that he half faced Tim. Tim leaned further back in his seat, glanced over at Jason and Damian. Jason was halfway through his food, plate already partially empty, his eyes were up on Tim and Dick across from him. Tim watched as Jason lifted a forkful of potatoes and eggs to his mouth blindly, his shoulders slightly hunched and eyes shining a luminescent green.

Tim was reminded of a school field trip in third grade to the zoo. They had arrived just in time to watch the tiger feed. Jason resembled the tiger in this moment, relaxed, head lowered but eyes fixed on the group of elementary schoolers as it languidly tore into a raw, bloody pile of ground beef that the zookeeper had tossed into the cage.

Damian was in a similar state, green eyes like the waxy underside of a jungle plant, focused on Dick and Tim. He was doing a better job of hiding his focus, he was still sitting up straight for one, and was taking dainty, polite, bites of food just as he and Tim had both been taught to as children with high society parents.

Dick rolled his eyes and shoved the long gone cold pancake piece into his mouth. Around his chewing he beckoned Tim forward, “C’mon Timmy,” he said, voice slightly muffled until he swallowed, “You’re not gonna get any breakfast from all the way over there! This is your favorite, baby, you can’t miss out! Alfred made these just for you.”

Dick used the side of Tim’s fork to cut off another piece of the pancake on the top of Tim’s stack. He held it in the air with a beseeching expression on his face that automatically had Tim leaning forward an inch until he caught himself. Years of Dick at his window, Drake Manor and Wayne Manor alike (before he made up with Bruce), telling Tim to live a little and come out for a late night ice cream or a birds only patrol. Dick giving Tim that look usually meant good things, it made Tim’s stomach flutter in anticipation before he remembered what Dick was asking.

Tim felt trapped. He wasn’t sitting in a hardback chair at the dining table, he was pressed down into an overly plush bed by gentle but insistent hands, his peripheral vision was obstructed by pillows. Just like before Tim could feel his family’s eyes on him, full of expectations and- and something Tim couldn’t put a name to something pressing and desperate and heavy that was magnifying Tim’s irrational feeling that he was a small caged bird fluttering around a room full of predators waiting to pounce.

Tim's voice came out as a cowed, quiet, shy thing. "Dick," and Tim's detective trained eyes picked up on his older brother repressing a shiver, "can you please drop it?" Tim was back to begging, "Please?" If any of the others at the table had ever been around Tim when his parents were visiting they would recognize his tone as the same self conscious, resigned persona that Tim often fell into when he felt lost and cornered. The occupants of the breakfast table, however, had not been around Tim when his parents were in town, by Tim's own design, and so rather than being concerned with Tim's sudden lapse into past behaviors Tim could see a bizarre mixture of delight and pleased surprise on the faces around him. Had they looked this way when he had begged last night too?

Dick shrugged, a confident playful energetic gesture that had Tim curling up further into the prey mentality that itched at his fingertips and pressed at the back of his neck. He forced himself back into a proper sitting position in his chair and then shifted towards Dick.

The drag of the chair legs over the hardwood wasn't loud, Alfred had put something on the feet of the chairs to let them glide easily and not leave scratches, but the dampened drag still echoed in Tim's ears. It was like when you walked down an empty hallway and your footsteps sounded like gunshots. With Tim's stiff movements being the only cause of noise in the room the sound was amplified to his ears and he could feel heat building in his face.

The most embarrassing part was yet to come. Dick smiled at Tim when the boy had finally turned enough to face him and held the fork aloft in the air a scant few centimeters away from Tim's mouth, allowing Tim some control. Tim just had to lean forward, open his mouth, and take the bite of the pancake off of the fork. That was all he had to do. He had once eaten pieces of an untoasted pop tart from the grimy fingers of a kidnapper trying to hold him for ransom, this was no different, he needed food to live, Damian was right. He was starving and denying himself food would only make his recovery more rocky.

Lean forward, he told himself. But Tim couldn't do it, his hands were clenched together tightly in his lap as he fought against the odd mental hang up that was stopping him from eating his favorite breakfast food. His stomach was rebelling against him, fluttering and clenching in equal measure. He felt like throwing stones were being tossed into his stomach acid, ripples and small waves being sent against his insides as each small weight settled at the bottom before dissolving in a flurry of bubbles.

Just lean forward. Tim pictured his mother's delicately painted sharp fingernails wrapped around the fork. The stern look that would be in her eye, Bruce's figure behind Dick turned into Jack Drake, a glare that promised words would be had later if Tim didn't comply. He found himself lurching forward, nearly falling towards the fork. His lips parted at the same time and buttery flavor exploded against his taste buds.

Tim's teeth scraped against the tines of the fork as he pulled back. He chewed slowly, savoring the tangy aftertaste of the buttermilk and the fluffy texture of the pancake. It was only after he swallowed and opened his eyes that he realized he had closed them.

Dick was closer than he had been, almost bent over so that he was exactly face level with Tim. He had this giant grin on this face that was borderline unsettling, though once Tim opened his eyes the smile dimmed down to something softer. Tim refused to survey the rest of the room.

"Thanks," He said, the words flowing from his tongue like a memorized script. He had vague memories of his mother pinching his ear if he forgot to say thank you when her friends jokingly complemented his tux or nails digging into the skin of his wrist if he wasn't differential enough when asking to please go home because it was a school night, 'I don't care if it's a school night Timothy we have connections to make and don't you dare take a tone with me young man-

Dick had another piece of pancake held aloft and Tim repeated the process. Every now and then Dick would hold up a chunk of potato or a spoonful of eggs or a slice of breakfast sausage. Tim's plate dwindled down in this way, one bite at a time. Tim's embarrassment grew every time he opened his mouth, he was certain that he was pink down to his collarbones at this point.

"May I have a piece of fruit next?" Tim asked, he needed something sharper, something to pull him from musing on the past and the sensations washing over him, his father's hand tousling and then pulling at his hair joined his mother's sharp pin pricks alongside the ever present warmth on his cheeks. 'You have to say 'may I' kiddo, sounds better than 'can I', I know you know that.'

Dick swallowed, his Adam's apple bobbing up and down as he turned to bring the fork back to the plate. Instead, to Tim's utter bafflement, his mind sinking further into the unmoored state he had found himself

in, the same state he had fought against in Damian's bathroom, Dick set the fork down on the table. He reached for a strawberry with his fingers, a sticky combination of fruit juice and a light dusting of sugar Alfred had applied smudging on his brother's fingertips as he adjusted his grip on the fruit and held it in the space between himself and Tim.

When he had eaten the poptart from the kidnapper, the man had been careful that the pieces he offered Tim were large enough that Tim could take hold of them with his teeth without his lips brushing the kidnappers fingers. It had been clinical, almost, a necessity of keeping Tim's arms tied while they waited for a call back from Tim's parents with news on a ransom that even a young Tim had been sure wouldn't be coming after the first twelve declined calls.

Dick's held the strawberry so that his fingertips were at the base, the point of the fruit pointing towards his own palm. To get the berry into his mouth Tim would have to take Dick's fingers in alongside it.

Tim leaned forward again, and heard a hitch of breath from across the table as he made contact with Dick's fingertips. He had to open his mouth further than before, the stretch straining his jaw as he readjusted to allow the base of the fruit and Dick's fingers slip past his lips. The chilled fruit and warm fingers contrasted oddly against Tim's tongue. The sugary sweetness of the fruit juice and the barely there salt that clung to Dick's skin waging a war against Tim's senses.

Tim bit down very gently and slowly, The finger bracing the top of the fruit withdrew without fanfare, allowing the top row of Tim's teeth to sink into the fruit. Dick's thumb and middle finger rested against the edges of Tim's bottom lip for a moment before withdrawing as well. Tim used his tongue to flip the fruit and drag the strawberry the rest of the way into his mouth before sealing his lips.

Tim felt his cheeks bulge slightly as he chewed, it was a large strawberry. Despite Tim's hopes, the sharp sweetness did nothing to drag Tim back to the present. He found himself swallowing quickly, stuffed cheeks were not dignified.

Almost immediately Dick's fingers reappeared in front of his face with a blueberry pinched between his thumb and forefinger. There was no red left over from the stained sugar of the strawberry, though Tim didn't notice this as he swayed forward again in somewhat of a trance, his mind hazy with the routine that he had been lured into and his stomach warm and truly full for the first time in a while.

Collecting the blueberry was an easier affair than the strawberry. It was followed by a raspberry nestled like a hat on top of Dick's finger. Then a piece of potato, it seemed the fork had been retired entirely, and then the last bit of pancake, until Tim's plate was empty and he was overly full, stomach twinging slightly when he sat up straight in his chair after Dick's finger's failed to appear in his line of sight again.

Tim caught it this time, as Dick brought up his fingers that were slick with butter and Tim's saliva and popped the digits into his own mouth. Tim blinked. Something about Dick's expression, the way he sucked at his fingers until they were clean of everything but his own spit, jerked Tim out of his almost zen mood and set his heart racing. He could feel eyes on him from all sides and he wanted to retreat, regather, and strategize.

Even when he lived in the Cradle while sorting out the league of spiders he hadn't felt so cornered and monitored as he did at this moment.

Dick slid Tim's plate in front of him just for Alfred to return and collect their empty dishes. "Thanks, Alfred," Tim said when the butler's wrinkled hand grabbed the newly returned plate.

"It was my pleasure, Master Tim. I do hope you're feeling better." Alfred smiled warmly at Tim and patted him on the head before going around and collecting the other empty plates. He threw a "Drink your milk before I return for the serving dishes, Master Tim," over his shoulder as the door to the kitchen swung shut behind him, which effectively doused Tim's brief feeling of normality at the routine interaction.

Tim really didn't feel like drinking anything.

Jason cleared his throat before standing, adjusting the collar of his t-shirt with one hand. "I'm gonna set up a movie in the living room," he said shortly, stomping out afterward.

As always with Jason there was the unspoken invitation to join him. Unspoken because Jason would never deign to actually ask for the company of his family even if he longed for it.

Damian stood and ghosted around the table towards the exit. When he passed by Dick, the older boy popped out of his seat and slung an arm over Damian's shoulder. "Dami, you think we can convince Jason to put on something animated?"

“I doubt it,” Tim heard Damian drawl as they left the room. “I will be pleased if we don’t have to watch Pride and Prejudice for the thousandth time.”

Tim and Bruce stared at each other from across the table. There was a soft clang from the kitchen and Bruce tilted his head slightly in the direction of the glass of milk. It was one of the big glasses, and it was heavy when Tim picked it off from the table. He turned away from Bruce but that didn’t erase the feeling of his watchful eyes.

Tim figured he didn’t have much time till Alfred came back if that clang from the kitchen was Alfred’s usual courtesy warning. He tipped the glass back and drank quickly, squeezing his eyes shut. He took it too fast, fast enough that twin rivulets of liquid slipped from the corners of his mouth, tracing a path down his chin and then his neck.

When the glass was finally empty Tim gasped for breath, He set the glass down gently on the table while he wrenched his wrist over his face to collect the spilled drops and then palmed at his neck. He straightened up and set his hands down in his lap when he heard Alfred’s prim footfalls. He had just enough time to paste a passable smile on his face and moderate his breathing before Alfred appeared in the doorway.

“Ah,” Alfred smiled, one of the rare ones that he often reserved only for Tim, “Well done, Master Tim,” he said, plucking the glass off the table and starting to gather the others.

Tim stood woodenly and stacked up the serving dishes so that Alfred could take them in one trip. An action born of habit. Mrs. Mac always liked it when he helped. She’d pat the back of his hand after he helped her dry the dishes. The ceramic rattled in his grip when he nestled them together and a large hand settled atop his own.

“You don’t have to bother with that, chum,” Bruce said, picking Tim’s hand up off the dishes and tucking it into the crook of his elbow, patting it lightly before settling in on top of Tim’s hand holding it in place.

“Indeed,” Alfred agreed, “Go and enjoy some movies with your brothers. I’m sure I can persist without your aid just as I do every other night you’re not at home Master Tim.”

Tim felt a twinge of guilt at that and automatically pulled into himself, away from Bruce. He didn’t get far at all, Bruce’s hand on top of his tightened, halting his progress. Bruce steered them out to the

living room, hardwood turning to carpet against Tim's bare feet. When they got in front of the couch Jason and Dick both reached out a hand towards Tim, an innocuous empty spot between them.

Dick's fingers grazed his wrist and Jason's his thigh before Bruce pulled Tim past them and then into his lap. Tim stiffened instantly, leaning forward to get away while Bruce made that harder by popping the footrest out on the chair, sinking them deeper into the cushions.

"Bruce," Tim gasped as he set his hands on the armrests to try and leverage himself up. Protests formed on his tongue that were only half thought through but his train of thought was utterly derailed by the arm that snaked across his abdomen, pulling him flush to Bruce's chest.

Bruce crossed his ankles and then reached another hand down to adjust Tim's feet to lay where he wanted them to. His hand was large enough, and Tim's ankles slender enough, that he could nearly hold both of them in one hand.

"Bruce," Tim got his hands back on the armrests and twisted in Bruce's grip, "I-"

Bruce's lips pressed to his ear and Tim's vocabulary evaporated. "Tim," his voice was gentle in a way it never was, in a way that Tim had only caught glimpses of, once when Damian was sick and once when Bruce had nearly forgotten to switch off the coms before a rooftop encounter with Selina. He called her dear.

"Sweetheart," Bruce's voice was hot against Tim's skin, "stay here won't you?" his arm tightened minutely around Tim and Tim's hand's slipped from the armrest and fell into his own lap, Tim's finger's scrambled up to grip Bruce's arm.

"I- I don't," Tim cleared his throat, "I can't sit on the couch?"

"No," Bruce grumbled, nosing down so that he said the words into Tim's neck.

Once, when Jason was robin, Tim had watched Bruce hold him for nearly an hour, a yellow cape swallowed up into a sea of black on a rooftop after a grapple gun mishap. Dick had done the same to Bruce going on hundreds of times and when Damian had still been small and manageable the pair used to team up to keep the kid manageable when he was injured. Tim had a framed photograph of Bruce hugging Damian at one of his art shows on his fireplace mantle.

Tim had never been touchy feely like the rest of his family, even the members who tried to pretend they weren't. It was one of the things Steph had hurled in his face when she still held their breakup against him 'it's like you forget that your body exists, so lost in your mind and your fucking cases, words can't fix everything Tim and I'm tired of being the one reaching out'.

Dick complained too, whenever Tim got too squirrely during hugs or 'couldn't settle' and Jason always hit him upside the head when he tried to duck out of arms thrown over his shoulders. Bruce and Damian were the ones who usually didn't say anything about Tim's avoidance.

Tim has a cork board up in his mind with red strings and confusing connections. There's a scribbled bar graph with 'tolerance for no touch' up in one of the corners. Dick's fills up daily, Jason's every four and a half days, Damian needs to manhandle Tim to appease himself at least once a month, and Bruce has apparently reached his boiling point at a year and a half and is now over compensating by settling Tim into his lap like a house cat.

Dick scrambles so that he's on the armrest closest to the recliner, climbing over Jason in the process. Jason makes a protesting noise and nearly halts Dick by elbowing him in the throat but in the end is left towards the middle of the overly large couch. Damian rolls his eyes from the other armrest.

They end up watching a bland action movie that Jason baits Tim into criticizing with him. Tim keeps relaxing, almost forgetting that he's perched on Bruce's lap as he and Jason tear apart a continuity error, and then Bruce would shift underneath Tim and remind him all over again that he was on top of a person rather than an especially warm and firm seat cushion.

Dick picks the movie after that, and then Damian the next. Popcorn appears at some point and Tim has half a bowl through Dick's movie before he's too full up again to even think about another bite. He's blinking sleepily at the screen through the menu for Damian's pick and even though he fights sleep because Damian and Tim had surprisingly similar tastes in films, he falls asleep only twenty minutes in.

punishment comes to thoes who wait

Chapter Notes

gang would you believe that after answering all those comments being like: i shall CERTAINLY post before the end of February, i got sick and then found out that apparently I was born with one kidney??? I was all delirious with fever like: this is so tim drake core of me

ANYWAY i want to thank everyone who read and commented last chapter!! I was honestly a bit blown away with the reception you guys said so many nice things!!! it really motivated me to get this chapter done and to start planning the final one. specific shoutout to commenter Elora_dawson because your comment on the 19th (which was also tim's birthday!!) gave the the final boost I needed to crank out what I needed to to feel alright about posting this. I know it's been a while and I want to say thank you for everyone's patience and understanding!

it might be a little rough around the edges, and no promises on spelling, but without further ado here is chapter two!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The moment Tim's body finally relaxes on top of Bruce is heaven. He's been jumpy the entire movie marathon, one moment loose and speaking with Jason and the next quiet and tense atop Bruce's thighs. Bruce had wanted very badly to kiss at Tim's neck, nibble at the skin behind his ear to get Tim to just enjoy being taken care of. The fastest route to acceptance was enjoying the thing you were meant to accept and some pleasure would go a long way to springboard Tim into letting his family look after him for once in his goddamned life.

Bruce hadn't been in a good place when Tim came into his life. He'd been a monster more than a man, a vigilante above all else, even caretaker. Tim had looked after him more than the other way around and by the time time Bruce had his head out of his ass Tim was off with a fake uncle and then he was emancipated and then he was spending more and more time off in San Francisco in a tower with security Bruce couldn't get past without asking Barbara for some kind of help and she'd never do that.

Everything had spiraled until Bruce didn't even know that Tim had

been off in the Congo jungle, nearly getting himself killed until Dick burst through the front door of the Manor with an unconscious Tim cradled in his arms.

Alfred checked in on Tim's condition in the medbay down in the cave and by then Damian was home from school, his brow furrowed. Jason followed soon afterward, an excuse about grabbing more knives spilling out of his mouth even as he beelined for a pale and sweating Tim's bedside.

Alfred left once it became apparent that they needed to get an IV drip for Tim. Leslie had agreed to have them ready for Alfred at the clinic alongside a bottle of Tim's usual pills and a more updated medical file because Tim had scars that Alred was unfamiliar with. A discovery that had furrowed the old butler's eyebrows and brought a faint flush of anger to his cheeks.

As soon as he was through the door his other children had turned on him.

"This can't keep happening," Dick said, voice completely void of any of his normal chipperness.

"Agreed," Jason said from Tim's bedside, where his fingers were combing through Tim's hair, "You got me on a leash old man, but you can't keep a little thing like Timmy in line?"

Bruce scoffed, "I don't have you on a leash Jason."

Jason smirked, "Maybe not," his eyes darted back to Tim and his face collapsed, "But you sure as hell need to get baby bird on one." Jason swallowed, when he spoke again his voice was scratchy, clearly holding back emotion. "I can't stand to see him like this B, it makes me think about the early days when I-"

"When you almost slaughtered him?" Damian interrupted.

"Like you're one to talk demon brat," Jason spat back at him, though his tone was still quiet in a hope not to wake Tim.

Damian bristled, "That was before I saw his usefulness and elegance in battle."

"Before you got a puberty sized crush on him you mean?" Jason said back, cruelty dripping from his tongue.

“Stop squabbling,” Dick snapped, “We’re not talking about any of that shit right now, we are talking about how we can keep Timmy safe.”

“He needs someone looking after him,” Jason said, “Someone to worry about leaving behind or at least someone to stop him from going on adventures more suited to the supes with alien blood.”

“That’s supposed to be us,” Dick said.

“But it hasn’t been,” Jason snapped, “It hasn’t been for a good long while and we all fuckin know it.”

Bruce hummed in affirmation.

“Then let's fix that,” Damian said evenly, “Timothy clearly is unaware of how much affection we all,” he glanced around at the occupants of the room at this, “hold for him. We just have to be honest and Timothy will surely strive to meet our expectations of him, as he once did for my grandfather.”

“Uh-uh,” Dick disagreed, “He would run first. Before he sorted that whole spiders thing he tried everything to get out of the cradle and he still ended up blowing the place up.”

“Well,” Jason hedged, “the cradle is evil, so…”

“It goes beyond that” Dick said, “Tim’s flighty, skittish, he always has been. He can’t stand the thought of actually depending on someone.”

“It’s true,” Bruce grumbled.

“So what the fuck are we supposed to do then,” Jason demanded, “I’m this close to locking the kid up in one of my basements but I have a feeling you guys might object to that.”

“Todd should not be allowed to be Timothy’s sole keeper,” Damian gritted out in, “he would allow his mind to waste away and-”

“And you wouldn’t be allowed to get your dick wet in something that was mine,” Jason growled, eyes flashing green.

Tim whimpered in his sleep and Jason extracted his hand from Tim’s hair with a pained expression on his face.

A sour feeling swirled in Bruce’s stomach, acidic. He wanted to take the words back before he said them, erase them from his thoughts, and bury the brief spike of adrenaline and excitement that thrummed

in his throat before his conscious kicked in.

He said them nonetheless. “We have to trap him.”

His sons stiffened. Being trapped was not a state that any of the bats preferred to be in.

Dick opened and closed his mouth a few times, “What do you mean... Trap him?”

Bruce sighed and sat down heavily in a swivel chair near the medicine cabinet. “Like you said, Tim is skittish. If we confront him head on he’ll run and if we try to lock him up outright he’ll hate us and probably find a way out since he’s the one who designed most of the security measures.” Bruce steepled his hands in front of himself, “Tim’s biggest hang up is that he doesn’t like relying on other people. Our challenge is that many of us here have proven to Tim in the past that we cannot be relied on. Nursing him back to health is a good start but it would take something more emotionally debilitating for Tim to truly feel like we are his solace.”

“Should we kill one of his idiotic teammates,” Damian suggested, “he will be driven to our arms out of grief.”

“More likely he would grieve with the other members of Young Justice,” Dick corrected, “But that's a good kick to get the ball rolling.”

Jason laced his hands together behind his head, and kicked his feet up on the edge of Tim’s cot, “Tim goes crazy with grief anyway, example one Kon, example two Bruce. What about blackmail? Anyone have anything good on him? Something we could pretend to be disappointed in him for so he’ll wanna stick around to prove he’s still a good boy?”

Dick laughed, “Oh as if, he’s harder to blackmail than Babs.”

“Yeah I figured it was a longshot, so then… what? Make new blackmail?” Jason asked.

“That’s a thought,” Dick agreed, then he scoffed at himself, half a laugh making its way out, “Pour some warm water on him and have one of us help him clean the sheets?”

Humor saturated the room for a moment.

“That might,” Damian said, “Actually work. Timothy is easily embarrassed and something so childish would be especially humiliating to him, taking into account his absent childhood it might draw up memories that endear us to him further.”

Jason’s eyes darkened, “Using his sad fucked up past against him doens’t feel like something people who care about him should be doing.”

“It’s what’s best for him,” Dick argued, “You know what it’s like Jason, thinking there isn’t a soul in the world that you can rely on. The difference between you and Tim is that you had a while where you knew that didn't have to be the truth, Timmy he never did.”

“It can’t be pretend,” Bruce said, getting them back on track, “Tim would see through it in a second.”

“So we make it happen,” Dick said, a smile stretching across his face, “Tim forgets about his own bodily needs most of the time anyway, it won’t be hard.”

“He needs to know we’ll care for him in every way, in every sense, beyond just picking him up when he’s down or cleaning up after him,” Bruce mused, “He has to give up some of his control.”

Jason laughed, “Imagine one of us said that shit to you, give up control? He’s going to fight us like a bat outta hell.”

“But he also cares for us,” Damian said, “even if he doesn’t believe we can be truly trusted, he will hesitate to hurt us. If we push enough-”

Bruce interrupted this time. “He’ll snap and we will be there to put his pieces back together.”

What they hadn’t discussed then, that all of them had been taking advantage of, was the size difference between themselves and Tim. Tim was slender, he had a dancer’s body, or a figure skater’s. The rest of them were brawlers and gymnasts, broader shoulders, taller, bigger hands. Tim was delicate in comparison, easily maneuverable, manipulated.

Having Tim limp in his lap reinforced this thought and scared Bruce half to death at the same time. He’d trained Tim well, and Shiva and Ra’s had trained him even better. He knew that Tim could protect himself but seeing him like this, small against Bruce’s bulk, all he could imagine was Tim pressed down under hands with only cruel

intentions.

The dragon princess that Tim had faced off against in the Congo was currently being rehabilitated at a justice league facility and Batman had gotten three emails from the supervisors asking if Tim had recovered enough to visit her yet because she kept asking for ‘the little red bird’. Footage pulled from her holding cell revealed her pacing back and forth, fingers pressed to her lips, eyes glazed, muttering about a worthy vessel for her hatchlings. It made Bruce sick, thinking of a verifiable stranger, a recent villain, wanting to know Tim so intimately.

Tim shifted in his lap, head lolling back until the cold tip of his nose brushed against the stubble on Bruce’s chin. Bruce tilted his chin down to press a kiss to the corner of Tim’s mouth.

It was time to put the little bird to bed. Bruce got up carefully, moving Tim’s legs so that they were draped over one of his arms and cradling the back of Tim’s head so that his face pressed to Bruce’s throat. Hot little exhales of breath drifted against Bruce’s skin.

The conversation that was playing on the screen suddenly stopped. When Bruce glanced over at his sons Damian had the remote in his hand, pointed at the television, but all three of their eyes were trained on Tim. Bruce nodded his head towards the door.

Jason stood up instantly, jostling Dick as he extracted himself from the depths of the coach cushions and sending his older brother into Damian’s side. The teenager grunted and shoved Dick off of him, who had latched on the moment they made contact, and stood to follow. Dick trailed behind, pouting.

Laying Tim down in his bed reminds Bruce of snow white. Tim’s ink black hair against the white of the pillow case, his mouth pink and slightly open in his sleep, dark eyelashes fanning over his cheeks. He could be a princess very easily, there’s something about Tim that’s undeniably elegant, dainty, like a teacup or an intricate hair comb, something useful but beautiful and breakable all the same, he could be plunged into eternal slumber at any moment, at any time without Bruce there to protect him.

Bruce arranges the covers over Tim, leaving one hand out. He absentmindedly traces the veins that show through Tim’s pale skin, calloused fingertips over delicate knuckles, like silk laid over ceramic. It takes a considerable amount of Bruce’s self control to pull his hand

away. It takes considerably less self control to pluck a vial from his pocket and place it under Tim's nose.

Tim takes a few deep, slow, breaths of the concoction that Bruce put together just for him before he visibly settles into an even deeper sleep. He looks almost weighed down by the sleep, like it's pressing him into the mattress.

"How are we doing this?" Jason asks, "Last we spoke I think we were leaning towards a classic summer camp method but babybird did not drink enough water for that shit and I'm honestly not convinced it would work anyway, he held out for a longass time without even noticing yesterday."

"I concur," Damian grumbles, "Although I am hesitant to believe that Timothy would be fooled by anything that was not the truth. If the color isn't believable, the smell…"

"God, Dames, ew." Dick says emphatically, taking a dramatic step away from Damien and towards the door. "Ew."

Damian rolls his eyes. "It's a bodily fluid produced by every single person on the planet-"

Bruce watches as Jason takes this opportunity to go and perch by Tim's bedside, combing his hands through the other boy's hair, as he was, Bruce was learning, wont to do.

"Doesn't mean it's not also gross!" Dick shakes his head.

"But it does mean that it is distinct." Damian snaps at him.

"God chill out," Jason says, voice uncharacteristically soft as he looks down at Tim, "If we don't get him tonight we get him tomorrow. We have time even if it is limited."

Bruce hums. "Occam's razor would suggest that the easiest way around discovery would be to use the real thing, rather than trying to create an approximation."

There is a moment where Jason, Dick and Damian digest his words. He can tell when his meaning hits them because Dick's face comically scrunches up in disbelief, Jason's hardens, and Damian's goes artfully blank.

"Okay so you already knew that this was the backup plan and didn't

tell anyone because you knew we would think it was gross," Jason says, standing and stepping away from Tim so that he can point an accusatory finger Bruce's way. "I cannot believe you sometimes B."

"You want one of us to pee on him?" Dick asks incredulously, eyes huge in his face, "What the fuck."

"Not it." Jason says, "I'm not into that shit."

"Not it!" Dick shouts, followed by glares from Bruce's other boys for his volume. "I don't think I could do that to Timmy. It's just icky."

Bruce raises an eyebrow at Damien, who has been silent. Jason and Dick whip towards their little brother. Jason's eyes narrow, and Dick's seem to widen even further somehow.

Jason scoffs and crosses his arms. "Fucking figures that the animal lover would-"

Dick, always quick to jump to Damian's defence, balks: "Jesus, Jason! That is not-"

"Oh no, you're right" Jason says, voice playfully light as if he is having an epiphany, "it's probably because he's a possessive little fuck!"

Dick has his hands on his hips now, nearly to lecture mode. "Just because he's almost taller than you-"

Jason rolls his eyes. "That is not what this is about-"

"You are both imbeciles," Damian snarls, "There's a fucking IV stand in the closet, obviously." .

Bruce's two oldest whip around to look at him and he only barely suppresses the twitch of his mouth that would give away his amusement. They seem to catch on anyway.

"Oh," Dick says, quick to give in to forgiveness and happiness, a little lion cub gnawing on its tamers fingers and then licking them better, "Oh that's much better."

Jason rolled his eyes.

"May I insert the IV, father?" Damien asks.

*

When Tim wakes up the first thing he feels is dread before he registers anything else.

Tim has woken up to the feeling before, but usually it was accompanied by the coarse texture of rope or the tight clamp of a pair of handcuffs or if he was lucky the snickering of his classmates. None of those things meet him now, only an itchy dampness that made his eyes shoot open, and his stomach sink.

He didn't. He didn't. He wouldn't. He's twenty two-. He's never-

Tim held his breath as he reached out with fumbling fingers for the chain of his bedside lamp. There was a lack of response in them, like he was coming off of intense pain killers, but Tim knew it was just the nerves. The click of the chain scrapped against his ears. He couldn't help but think that his bedroom door would be thrown open at any moment. A mother henning Dick Grayson silhouetted in the doorway with disapproving hands on his hips or Bruce with a frown reminding him to rest. Living with so many people was so different from how Tim had spent most of his life, it was almost terrifying sometimes, to think that his door didn't have a lock that his family couldn't get through.

The lamp cast the room in a harsh white light, creating shadows at Tim's desk and the corners of his closet. Tim scooted up the bed, damp fabric catching enough that the waistband of the black and red pajamas that Damian had so tenderly tied the bow on, slipped down enough for a damp spot on Tim's lower back to meet the cool air.

Tim flung the covers away from him without letting himself think about it. The evidence was damning. They'd redressed his bed with white sheets instead of Tim's usual gray and the comforter, and the sheets between Tim's legs were stained that horrible yellow color.

Tim swallowed, his throat feeling dry and scratchy.

It was- It was mostly dry already, only really wet where the epicenter of the accident must have been. Tim got out of bed mechanically, shedding his pajamas as he went, wanting the damp fabric off of him as soon as possible.

He strips the bed mechanically and then hesitates at his own door. It would be best to move as quickly as possible, so that no one else hears him, but he can't- he has to take a shower, at least a brief one.

The nearly scalding water leaves Tim's skin red and hot when he steps

out. He only dries off as much as it takes not to drip on any of the Manor's expensive carpets before digging out some sweatpants and an oversized t-shirt that probably used to be Jason or Kon's because it's a plain black that his other friends wouldn't be caught dead in.

Tim's feet and hands chill quickly when he reaches the lower floors of the manor, large old houses like these always have that problem. It's with barely any awareness that Tim loads his sheets into the machine and slumps down onto the ground in exhaustion.

He leans his head back until he's staring at the ceiling and suddenly Tim is nine years old again, still too old for mistakes such as this, still alone, back pressed to the washing machine, the spin cycle vibrating through him in tune to the hitches in his breathing.

It was just after he had unwillingly solved the puzzle of Batman and Robin. He had nightmares, recurring nightmares, of Dick Grayson plummeting from the sky in the Robin costume and hitting the ground with the same horrible wet thump that his parents had, of Bruce Wayne putting on the Batman cowl and then not being able to take it off, clawing at the skin of his face that showed until his visible skin was soaked in blood his pleas for help were little more than the gargling of blood, of himself held at gunpoint by whatever rouge was out and about that week and spilling all his secrets without a second thought, betraying people who didn't even know he existed, damning them irrevocably.

Nine year old Tim would wake up in a cold sweat, gasping for air and trembling and… wet. Usually he was already crying but if he wasn't the realization that he had just wet his bed like a toddler always pushed him over the edge into loud choked sobs. Tim didn't need to quiet himself, the house was always empty, so he was allowed to cry as loudly as he wanted as he dragged himself out of bed and made the long dark trek down to the laundry room.

After the first few times he'd started sleeping on the floor in his bathroom, paranoid even as a child, because he didn't want to ruin his mattress and because it was tiring to wash and change the sheets so many times a week and he didn't have anyone around to buy a plastic mattress topper. At some point he'd stopped sleeping entirely, staying up to do homework, and then he started taking walks around the gardens, and it escalated into clutching fire escapes, looking at his heroes and reassuring himself that they were fine, that everyone was fine.

The nightmares stopped eventually. At some point he'd stopped going out to make sure Batman and Robin were still alive and started going because it was fun.

Tim hunches forward until his forehead meets his knees and exhales shakily. There's something going on. He knows that, he's not stupid, but he can't pin down the motivation, isn't sure why Dick had held him down last night, can't fathom why Damian would want to dress him, just does not know why Dick would hand feed him his breakfast or why Bruce would bully him into his lap at movie night.

They all seem like related events, some instinct in Tim is telling him that there's a connection he's not seeing, that he's being stupid, that he's being deliberately blind, that someone is going to get hurt if he can't put the pieces together, and that that person might be him.

His eyes have only been closed for a moment before the air around him is displaced and they snap back open and his head pops up from his knees fast enough to make his neck creak.

Jason is standing in the laundry room door, his hulking frame illuminated by the red light coming from the washer's interface, eerie and lurking with only blackness behind him. He's blocking the only exit, Tim notes somewhat uncomfortably, the cold of the tile sinking its claws into Tim's bare feet. He shivers.

Jason leans a shoulder against the doorframe and reaches up with his opposite arm to scrub a hand over his face. "What are you doing in here Timmy?"

Tim, briefly, has the absurd instinct to respond with 'nothing'. But that would probably just make Jason even more curious. "Laundry," He says instead, gesturing towards his sweats and t-shirt "My clothes are kinda musty."

Jason's arms are crossed now, he's wearing an A-shirt that makes his forearms and biceps stand out as especially dangerous. "That's why we gave you other stuff to wear, why change?"

Tim swallows. He's not sure how long he's been down here, how much longer the washer has to go, how long Jason will keep talking to him. He offers a truth, because even though Tim is a practiced liar Jason has always been able to draw blood from Tim no matter how he tries to protect himself. "Pajama sets…they make me feel like a kid, the only time I wore stuff like that was back when my parents controlled my entire wardrobe. I guess it just makes me feel a little helpless, or-

out of control or something, like someone's gonna come in and try to tell me I have a bedtime." Tim shrugs.

Jason's face, which had mostly just looked tired before, collapses into something dark and anticipatory. Something Tim has seen before from the bottom of a set of stairs, the ghost of Jason Todd pursuing him with the single minded focus of a hunter. It has Tim's heart beating faster in his chest. "Maybe someone should." Jason says.

"What do you mean by that?" Tim asks, standing up, slowly uncurling from his place in front of the washing machine to try and meet Jason's eyes head on. It's impossible, Jason has always been unfairly tall, but Tim can try.

"I mean," Jason says, voice low, "Isn't the whole reason you're here because you couldn't take care of yourself? Maybe you need some rules to follow, for your own good."

"Don't start this shit with me again, Jason." Tim snaps, but his voice is… wobbly, weak around the edges. "I'm not your Robin, I'm not even Robin anymore period, you don't get to boss me around."

Jason growls, a low, rumbling noise from deep in his chest, and that's how Tim knows that he's fucked up.

"That's right," Jason takes a step towards Tim, hand reaching out to flick the light on in the laundry room like an afterthought. The added light only makes Tim feel more caught despite the increased visibility, like he's under a spotlight. "You're the only one who gets to boss people around aren't you? Tim knows best, Tim makes the plans, you know that's part of the problem right?"

Jason takes another step and the small of Tim's back meets the edge of the washing machine. Tim isn't sure if the rumbling is the machine or if he's just trembling.

"Maybe if your team didn't see you as infallible, some of them would carry extra meds for you like fucking all of us at home do? Maybe some of them would watch your back instead of waiting for you to call them?"

Jason is boxing Tim in, his arms braced on either side of Tim's hips, his eyes faintly glowing as they glare down at him. Tim turns his head away, looking towards the pitch black window at the end of the laundry room that usually lends a view to the backyard. In the dead of night the window is a mirror, and Tim, as on edge and scared as he is,

still manages to note how… intimately Jason has positioned them. Tim watches, dazed, in the window as Jason's hands lose some of their tension and settle on his hips rather than beside him.

It's a shock of warmth that makes Tim jump in Jason's hold. He snaps his face forward, meeting Jason's eyes for only a moment before Jason ducks his head, his nose trailing up Tim's neck until he's speaking into Tim's ear. "If you were my Robin I'd look after you, I'd make sure you behaved, I'd punish you if you did something wrong."

Tim is frozen, a reaction that he hardly has outside of Galas with his parents' voices haunting him. Tim tries to take a step to the side, break out of Jason's grip, but he can't. He's utterly caught between Jason's hands, fragile bird wings fluttering uselessly against calloused palms. The word 'punish' echoes in his head ominously.

Tim tries to sound authoritative: "Jason, let me go."

Teeth press against his earlobe in a bite so gentle that Tim doubts it's happening until the pressure is gone. "No," Jason breaths against his skin, and his hands tighten to a painful degree on Tim's hips.

Then Tim's being spun around, and one of Jason's broad hands is splayed across Tim's back and it's pushing, down, down, down bending Tim's spine to Jason's whims. The hand left on his hip is dragging him away from the washing machine and Tim automatically fights to stay upright but Jason pushes hard and fast, fast enough that Tim is bent over with his cheek on the chilled metal of the washing machine with Jason's palm against the nape of his neck before he can actually do anything about it. His wrists are gathered up in Jason's other hand, held tight against the small of his back. A small jerk of his hands proves the hold is solid.

"Hey! Jason, what the fu-" Tim tries to twist his face to get Jason into his field of vision but Jason picks him up by the neck, hauling him up barely an inch from the surface of the washer before bringing him back down. Tim blinks hard against the pain that blossoms at his temple.

"Language," Jason says, neatly dodging a kick that Tim aims at his kneecap. "Good Robins don't have filthy mouths do they?"

Tim kicks out again, Jason picks up Tim's head and slams him down against the machine harder than before. His control over Tim's upper body seems absolute the moment his forehead meets metal. "Settle the fuck down."

Tim, decidedly, does not settle the fuck down, he twists, hard enough to get one shoulder up, before he's pressed back down. He immediately kicks out, knowing that to have the leverage for that kind of pressure both of Jason's feet have to be on the ground. The blow connecting is gratifying.

"Christ-" Jason grits out and Tim quickly kicks at the other knee. Jason hits the ground, but he drags Tim with him, off the washing machine and into his lap. There's a struggle, that mostly feels like Tim is struggling against a solid wall of muscle and grabbing hands, at one point he's certain that Jason pulls his hair which is downright low.

Tim's escape attempts cease, however, when a solid smack lands on his backside as he's trying to crawl completely off of Jason's legs. Tim squeaks and tenses up, abruptly aware that he's over Jason's knees, stomach pressing into Jason's thighs, ass tilted slightly up.

Tim scrambles to get his hands under his chest to push himself up but before he can do it Jason's fucking hand is on his wrists again, holding them tightly to his lower back and another slap lands on the opposite cheek that Jason had started with. Tim wiggles, but Jason just lifts the leg that Tim's hips are across, robbing Tim of any leverage. Another hit lands, hard and only muffled by the cloth between Jason's palm and Tim's skin.

Jason's fingers tighten across Tim's wrists. "I told you to settle down."

Indignation rises in Tim, "And I told you, you can't boss me around Jason! I was literally just doing laundry. I don't understand why you always have to start a fight I- OW! Jason!"

Another smack lands, harder than the other three. Jason has to be actually trying to get these to genuinely hurt. Tim has a high pain tolerance.

"Shut up," Jason tells him, and shakes Tim's wrists for emphasis which stings with an odd stretch in his biceps and forearms. Tim begrudgingly closes his mouth, wary of Jason's tone which he's been trying to ignore, the darkness to it, the roughness, the complete and dead seriousness. "You've been careless," and even though Tim knows that he wasn't, knows that he brought extra medicine, knows that he cleaned the wound as much as he could, knows that he wasn't careless, that he's never careless, the words hurt.

Careless… His dad used to call Tim that often as a child, when he was actually around. Don't run, don't play on the carpet, don't touch.

Tim's childhood home was half museum and anything that damaged the artifacts was pinned on Tim, even if the real culprit was a window his mother had cracked to smoke or his father stumbling around tipsy in the evenings. Denying fault never worked with dad, never worked with mom, and it most definitely had never, ever, worked with Jason Todd.

"M' sorry," Tim mumbles without thinking about it, eyes on the tiled floor, hands relaxing from fists into a loose gathering of fingers. Jason's hands tighten on his wrists, a flash of pain that has Tim's head drooping until his cheek rests on the tile face turned towards the now still washing machine, where hopefully he can hide the tears that have rapidly gathered in his eyes, "m' sorry."

Jason's hand returns to Tim's backside but it's gentle, stroking up and down across Tim's ass. It's embarrassing at the same time that it's soothing. At once humiliating and comforting.

"Oh, Timbit," Jason says, and there's some warmth in his voice that makes Tim feel almost hopeful, that where they are now, the strange intimate position they've found themselves in, will be as far as whatever this fight they're having will go. "It's okay, baby, you know you messed up, now you just have to make it better."

"How do I make it better?" Tim asks, quick and easy as anything, like a kid who's been told they can get out of time-out if they just do this one thing. Tim's face feels like it's burning up against the tile.

"Take your punishment like a good boy," Jason says and any hope Tim had dissolves. "Stay still, and quiet, and count the hits." Jason's hand creeps up over to the waistband of his sweatpants, fingers burrowing under Tim's oversized shirt and meeting skin.

"Jason-" Tim jolts, a faint sense of alarm banging against the wall of humiliation and resignation that's built up inside of him.

Jason's hand pushes against his back, the entire span of his hand touching skin, and keeping Tim pinned across his legs. "What did I just say about staying quiet?"

Tim stays quiet, as Jason's fingers curl around the edge of his sweats and the waistband of his underpants and pull, dragging the clothing down slowly at first until he has to use quick yanks to get it unwedged from between himself and Tim. After a minute of fumbling that makes Tim feel like he's slowly being lowered into a spike pit, Tim's bare ass is exposed, his bottoms pulled down to his knees.

Goosebumps rise on Tim's skin and Jason chuckles, "You cold, baby?"

Tim jolts again when Jason's hand makes contact with the skin of his asscheek, rubbing up and down, following the curve of Tim's backside to his thigh and then upwards to the small of Tim's back.

"Don't worry, if you're good this won't take long. Ten for getting sick because you were reckless, ten for how fucking hard you just fought me, okay baby?"

Tim nods hot and cold all over, tensed for the first hit before it even lands. The noise of it is horrible, skin against skin. Tim never got spanked as a child, his parents didn't even like him enough to be that involved in his punishments. He was locked in his room, he was put in time out in a corner, he was sent to bed without dinner. Normal things, lonely things. Tim thinks that this is much worse.

"One," He counts only loud enough for Jason to hear him.

When they get to six, Jason stops pausing for Tim's count, hits falling fast and hard, so hard that Tim's certain the warmth in his cheeks isn't his imagination, that his ass has to be bright red where Jason lays his spanks. Every now and then Jason hits Tim's upper thigh and it stings so badly that Tim's count comes out strained and lilting, something next to a moan of pain.

"Twenty," Tim pants the last number out, feeling like he's had a workout, like he's just spent a day running from a predator in the woods, and not 30 minutes tussling and then getting spanked by his brother. Tim's muscles are all clenched tightly, his entire body is heated with adrenaline, blushed with humiliation, but his ass feels like a lighter is being held close to the skin. It's painful, not the most painful thing Tim has ever felt, but painful enough that the tears in his eyes refuse to dry up.

Jason rubs his hand up and down Tim's skin and it's not soothing anymore, it feels like Jason is somehow moving his hand in the wrong direction no matter how he caresses Tim's skin, snake scales pet the wrong way, velvet pushed against the grain.

"Done?" Tim asks, pulling lightly against where Jason still has his wrists in a chokehold. His brain feels fried, his tongue clumsy in his mouth after biting back noises of pain. The laundry machine is blurry and his throat feels raw like it always does when he's trying not to cry.

“Done,” Jason confirms, and he’s finally, finally releasing Tim’s wrists. Tim could do without him pulling up his sweatpants and helping him to his feet, but his knees would probably buckle otherwise so he withstands the treatment.

When Tim is on his feet, Jason settles his hands on Tim’s shoulders, “Say thank you.”

“Thank you,” Tim parrots back robotically.

Jason pats his cheek, “Good. Let me put you to bed?” Jason’s other hand joins the palm on his face, and then Jason’s thumbs brush under Tim’s eyes, preemptively ready to wipe up tears.

Tim reboots, steps back so that Jason is no longer touching him, drags a quick forearm across his eyes and then crosses his arms. “Um, no, no I still need to put my clothes to dry. I don’t want Alfred to catch me and insist on doing it himself.”

“Awww, such a thoughtful young man,” Jason coos. “‘Cept I know that’s not actually what you're doing, Timbers.”

“What do you mean?” Tim asks, operating on his basest instincts, half of his sense burned away under Jason’s hand, the rest scrambling to come up with some sort of damage control protocol. His fingers dig into his own arms, a desperate clutch like a bird's talons.

“I mean that I stopped by your room before I found you here, saw the mattress stripped.”

Jason’s hands are back on Tim’s face, thumbs under Tim’s eyes, poised for tears.

“Did you wet the bed again Timmy?” Jason asks, and on the next swipe of his thumb a trail of warm water is wiped away.

It’s like some kind of dam has broken inside of Tim. He holds his breath, tears streaming silently onto Jason’s hands for a moment before he needs air. A ragged inhale becomes a sob as Tim nods into Jason’s hands, his own fingers digging into his biceps as he clutches at himself to stop the flood.

“I didn’t mean to- it was an accident- I haven’t- I don’t-,” Every sentence Tim tries to start ends with a gasp for air but some part of him, a small part of him leftover from when he was a kid cleaning up his own messes still wants to talk to someone, wants them to know

he’s not a baby, wants to explain.

Jason pulls him into a hug, tucking Tim’s head into his neck and stroking his hair as Tim dissolves into real sobs. Tim clenches his eyes shut and fists his hands in Jason’s t-shirt, he doesn’t want to be here, he doesn’t want to be crying on Jason.

Tim wants to be asleep, in bed, with dry sheets. But he ruined that, so Jason’s arms it is.

The trek up to Jason’s bedroom feels both impossibly long and short at the same time. Long because Jason has him in a princess carry, knees slung over one of his arms, head laid against Jason’s shoulder with a possessive hand at Tim’s neck to keep him in place. It’s still faintly warm, too hot from the friction of flesh against flesh.

But short, short because of the mortification of being placed down on the bed and wincing at the pressure against his stinging cheeks. Jason’s gentle handling of him into a position that won’t put pressure on his ass. It makes Tim’s face heat up to stovetop levels, especially when Jason settles a proprietary hand on the small of his back, pulling him against his chest like Tim is some kind of teddy bear.

When Jason falls asleep Tim extracts himself from between his arms, tip toes to the door, closes it gently behind himself, and then he sprints to the batcave.

His hands are shaking, and he takes the steps down two at a time, in leaping bounds that are begging fate to twist his ankle. Nonetheless he makes it down unharmed and to the bike hanger. When the automatic lights flick on, and he can see his hands in the light he furrows his brows at a small scratch on the inside of his wrist. He doesn’t remember getting that, but his tussle in the jungle had only been days ago hadn’t it? Tim feels like it's been years.

He doesn’t bother trying to find a helmet, just lays hands on the first bike he can find and wheels it towards his preferred exit tunnel.

Tim takes a deep breath once he’s there and forces himself to let it out slowly. He swings his leg over the motorcycle, places his hands on the handles, and twists, bracing himself for the loudness of an engine, the thrumming of a machine underneath him. Instead, there’s a sound close to coughing, and the bike fights for a few breaths before it stutters out and falls silent.

Tim doesn’t panic.

He settles the bike out of the way and then randomly chooses another bike, something from the middle of the hanger instead of the first one he could touch. When that one doesn't work he tries another, and another, and another. Eventually he stops wheeling them over to the tunnel and just tests them in place, faster that way.

Not a single bike in the hanger had any gasoline in it.

"Where are you going Tim?" Dick's voice rings out like a whip crack in the hanger, accusatory and knowing.

Tim's parents had cameras on their favorite pieces in the manor. Tim, once, had taken down a tea cup from one of their display shelves in the sitting room that they most often saw visitors in. It was a dainty, chipped thing that in retrospect Tim definitely could have cut his hands on as a child. It had a gold trim and was decorated with scenes from The Dream of the Red Chamber, a novel written in 1760 by Cao Xueqin.

All that Tim had cared about was the pictures of people on the side, he put it in the center of his play table and walked around, babbling to each of the painted women and offering them tea. Miss Mack had burst in about an hour in a hurry, ordered by his parents to secure the cup and then send Tim to bed without dinner. Afterwards Tim had been terrified for months, on his best behavior, foolishly believing that his parents had eyes on him and not just their most important investments.

"Nowhere," Tim replies to Dick a moment too late. He's caught up in the memory of that childhood paranoia, is drifting backwards towards his time with Lady Shiva who actually had watched his every move while he was under her tutelage. His voice is too biting and jaded. "Apparently I'm going nowhere."

"Yep," his older brother pops the P, and when Tim turns to look at Dick his hands are on his hips. He's looming in the doorway, the area behind him cast in shadow, the hanger lights casing Dick's face in strange shadows.

"That's a lot of effort to go to for little old me." Tim says, tracing his fingers over the leather seat of the ducati that he ended up behind. The texture was grounding in a way. His parents' house had been all carpet and drapes and crystal and marble. "Are the cars empty too?"

"Even the Batmobile." Dick is blithe, which is what tips Tim off to the fact that he's really angry. Dick only ever gets insufferably bubbly like

this when he's trying to hide something. Dick defaults to performing. All lights and cotton candy and popcorn and somersaults. Sweet circus sugar added to a boiling, bitter cup of tea.

"Why?" Tim can't help but ask, feeling blindsided and stranded. The last time Dick was this mad at him they didn't talk for weeks, but Tim had been angry too back then. He doesn't want to go back to that, he likes Dick. He likes the random text messages and the way that he'll barge into Tim's apartment to steal his food.

But unlike last time he doesn't know what he's done wrong, not really. There's the surface issues that his family are pretending to care about: his health, his recovery, his sleep. But Tim knows that's not right, the same way he knows when the Riddler tosses out a red herring, the same way he knows when Catwoman has laid out a false trail.

"Why the fuck would you do that?" Tim snaps, frustration welling up inside of him fruitlessly, uselessly. Frustration isn't going to help him here. Tim watches from under his eyelashes as Dick's demeanor softens itself out.

"We're worried about you Tim," Dick says, eyebrows upturned in genuine concern that makes Tim feel sick to his stomach.

Maybe he was being too harsh? Tim tries to soften himself back, keeps his eyes down, gentle his voice down to nearly a whisper, "You don't have to be. I could be out of your hair right now if you let me."

"That's not what we want and I know you know that." Tim flinches at the accusing tone, he can't help it. He takes a step backwards, and then shifts his weight, putting another bike between him and Dick. I know you know that Timothy, Janet says, why do you insist on behaving as if you're stupid? Tim stares down at the hanger floor, smooth concrete with tire marks and oil stains. He can't look back up at Dick, he can't.

"You know that," Dick's voice is thick with emotion, "You know that we want you here, that we want to take care of you, you know that."

Tim swallows, fists clenched. "Sure," he says, and it only sounds like it's the truth because Tim has so much practice at it.

"Then why do you keep fighting us?"

Then why do you keep doing this? Janet asks, crouching down in front of Tim in a way that Tim can't remember her ever doing except

for when she was unspeakably angry with him. Her hand reaches out and grabs his chin, deceptively gently before she jerks his head around to look at a jade sculpture of a crawling baby, its hair in little buns on top of its head. This sculpture was crafted by gemstone carvers during the Qing dynasty. It is older than you and me and your father combined.

“I have shit to do Dick,” Tim says, abruptly angry again, abruptly betrayed. “I can’t just stay here playing pretend like I don’t have responsibilities. My phone is back at the tower, my email is probably blowing up, I have time sensitive missions! I cannot just be here surrounded by you all- you all coddling me!”

Dick scoffs, “We aren’t coddling you-”

“Yes you fucking are!” Tim feels wild, on edge. He feels like the purple arcs of static electricity inside of a plasma orb, aching, reaching for the outside but trapped and existing only because of what they are trapped with. Dick is the high-voltage electrode. “Those stupid pajamas, the grippy socks? Like I can’t even fucking walk around the house on my own. Jason dragging me to meals and checking in on me in the middle of the night. You hand feeding me? Damian insisting on dressing me? Bruce hasn’t even asked me about the ancient temple that wasn’t on anyone’s radar! You’re treating me like a damaged toddler. I don’t appreciate it.”

You’re treating me like a toddler I never was, Tim thinks. You’re treating me like my parents used to treat the artifacts I wasn’t allowed to touch. Tim’s not that precious, he’s not that rare, he doesn’t deserve it and he doesn’t like it. It all feels wrong, tainted, contaminated by his inexperience, his discomfort.

“You should~” Dick says, singsong-like and light, as if Tim hasn’t just shouted at him. As if Tim hasn’t just given too much away. The electricity that had been burning Tim up inside suddenly evaporates into thin air.

“You should appreciate it,” Dick says, the concern from before has truly evaporated from his voice, leaving behind crystalized sugar, “After all we’re only doing these things because we care about you, because we miss you. Maybe… if you stopped by more than once a month our built up affection wouldn't feel like a tidal wave to you, but no one can change the past.”

“I-”

“I mean Tim…” Dick says, all sweetness and warmth, like a caramel left to melt in the sun, “Wetting the bed two times in as many days? Sneaking around the house? Running from your brothers? Forgetting to take your medicine? You’re acting like a child, baby, why shouldn’t we be treating you like one?”

“I-” Tim feels lost, first the anger and then, Dick was nearly crying at him and now, now Tim feels like he needs to take several steps away from his brother. Tim swallows his sudden trepidation and tries to recall his own anger and indignation he had felt only moments before. “If I recall correctly it was you holding me down that resulted in the first- uh-” Tim fumbles, a desperate desire to not use a childish word like mess or-

“Accident?” Dick says, with a subtle babyish twist to his tone, eyebrows scrunched down in mock sympathy, which did spark up a bit of anger in Tim since he knew damn well that Dick could feign sympathy with the best of them. Dick was clearly teasing him. Tim flushed.

“Dick-”

“Aw Timmy,” Dick interrupts him, “you don’t need to be embarrassed, baby. We all have accidents sometimes, well,” Dick is suddenly in front of him, he’s been moving forward this whole time, Tim realizes. He only has to reach over a single motorcycle to start fussing with Tim’s hair, “not usually at your age baby, but there was no harm done, and you were so sick and tired I think you can be forgiven.”

Dick’s chilled fingertips touch his forehead as he finger-combs Tim’s fringe so that it lays nicely, and then they trace the curves of his ears, tucking stray pieces behind them. Tim tries to shift back but Dick’s hands land on his shoulders in a parody of Jason’s earlier and it makes Tim freeze up.

“This second time though,” Dick says leadingly, shaking his head at Tim. “Did you have a nightmare or something sweetheart?”

Tim feels about three feet tall with Dick’s hands on him like this, fluttering around the top of his head, petting his hair like a beloved pet, fixing him, just slightly with every adjustment he makes to Tim’s appearance. If he was wearing a tie, Tim is certain that Dick would straighten it. Right now Dick is picking at the seam lines of his shirt so that they lie flat on his shoulders. Like he’s a dress up doll, like he really is the child Dick seems to be getting a kick out of pretending he

is.

“No,” Tim answers, turning his face to the side is almost worse than looking at Dick head on. He can feel Dick’s eyes skating over his cheeks, his forehead, his neck. Tim is cold again, bare feet against the cave floor, threadbare clothes. That’s probably why he’s shivering.

Dick’s fingers are at his chin now, guiding him to look back at Dick. “Eyes on me, baby. What happened then, Tim?”

“I don’t know,” Tim admits, briefly transported back in time again. To France, training with Lady Shiva and being asked again and again and again: what happened? Why did you fail? Why can’t you keep up? Why did that maneuver not work? Why isn’t Batman training you?

Tim was a fast learner, he knew the answers to so many questions. But it was with Lady Shiva that he realized, sometimes there isn’t an acceptable answer. Not like his parents, not like Bruce back then when he was a single minded easily pleased beast. Sometimes people didn’t want answers or theories. Sometimes they want you to be stupid.

“That’s okay,” Dick says, he’s crossed the last wall that Tim put up between them, easily sliding around the ducati and pulling Tim under one of his arms, drawing him close, rewarding his docility with kindness. Jason liked that too. Damian and Bruce as well. Tim is briefly elated at finally identifying a pattern in this mess, something predictable and understandable.

“Why don’t you sleep with me tonight, baby bird? So that I can make sure you don’t try to fly the coop.” Dick asks but his tone indicates that this is a forgone conclusion.

Tim abruptly feels the need to make sure Dick knows that Jason has already spanked him. Sometimes, when he did something particularly enraging, his parents would retreat to opposite sides of the house, as angry at him as they were at each other. As a result he would serve two punishments for his crime. One from his father, one from his mother, as they refused to believe that their counterpart would give a fair sentence.

“Jason already punished me.” Tim says quietly, as they make their way up the stairs and back into Bruce’s study.

“He- what?” Dick asks, taken off guard. Tim eyes him as he takes a few quick steps forward, drawing away from Tim so that he can walk backwards and see Tim’s face as they make their way to Dick’s room.

Tim hesitates, shakes his head to try and clear it, starts to reach for his fingers before remembering Dick's detestment of that fidget. Dick, probably wasn't going to punish him, Tim realizes slowly, so, so slowly. Tim didn't need to mention that, could have let it be a secret, could have escaped the further embarrassment of this additional humiliation that Jason gave to him. Tim very decisively shuts his damn mouth after a few halfhearted attempts at coming up with phrases that might sound similar enough to throw Dick off the trail, and coming up empty.

He's been making so many mistakes these past few days.

"Tim," Dick says sternly, frowning at Tim from the entryway to his bedroom. "Did you say he punished you?"

That is what Tim said. Because he's a fucking idiot who has never truly learned to keep his mouth shut.

"Baby, what did he do?" Dick asks.

Tim shuts his eyes for a moment, trying to gather himself. When he opens them he catches the tail end of Dick stepping towards him and pivoting, his calloused palms landing flat against Tim's shoulder blades. Tim stiffens. Dick ushers him into the room anyway.

Despite having both hands on Tim the door clicks shut softly behind them. Dick must have pulled some odd maneuver with his foot to close the door, Tim realizes. Since when has Dick cared about closing his door? Even when Dick had his girlfriends over the door always stayed open a scarring centimeter.

"It was nothing," Tim says, pleading with Dick to let it go. The evidence of Tim's transgressions against Jason only exists on his skin. Red imprints of the older boy's hands, faint bruising around his wrists. Tim didn't- Dick and Jason weren't mad about the bed wetting, even if Tim felt a deep shame even thinking of the soaked sheets, all he had done to Dick was try and get out of his way. Tim hadn't broken anything, Dick should be letting it go.

"Tim," Dick says warningly, obviously not letting it go. "I can't help you if you don't tell me. I know that Jason can get… rough sometimes, he can't help it, you know that."

"I- I know," Tim says, remembering the way that Jason's eyes had flashed at him, remembering his sweetness afterwards tucking Tim into his side in bed. He should have stayed, he knows that now. He's

gotten nothing out of this escape attempt.

Escape attempt? Tim thinks, turning the phrasing over in his mind briefly like it's an oddly shaped mirror shard.

"Sit down, Timmy." They've arrived at Dick's bedside. Tim stares down at the sheets, and hesitates only momentarily before the pressure against his sounders increases and he hastily twists to sit down. He manages to only wince slightly at the sting that he's been dutifully ignoring since his spanking ended.

Dick grabs the rolling chair from his desk and pulls it so that he's sitting across from Tim. Elbows balanced on knees, fingers steepled together, a picture of intent listening and boyish physicality all at once that horribly, terribly, charms Tim for a moment. It's so familiar, is all, his older brother settling in to get Tim to talk about his petty high school problems.

Only, it's not, because Dick is staring at him but no part of it is light, there's no shine in his eye that indicates his amusement, his eagerness to give Tim advice. Dick's eyes seem to eat up the light around them, really, as he asks Tim again: "What did Jason do?"

It's the quiet of the room that gets to Tim in the end. The tense silence where Dick's whirlpool eyes seem to bore into him. He's never done particularly well with silence. Tim used to have a CD player in his room, he used it so often that one day it just kept flashing NO DISK at him no matter how he gutted it and put it back together. All that there is now is the slow rotating of the ceiling fan and the squeak of the rolling chair when Dick adjusts his weight.

Tim thinks, why is opening my mouth around Dick starting to feel like the beginning of a panic attack? But ends up saying, "He spanked me," in a voice that is barely above a whisper. It feels confessional in a way that makes Tim distinctly uncomfortable, like he has done something wrong and not Jason, like this is his embarrassment, his burden, his fault.

Dick makes a kind of choked sound that Tim can't parse, and sits up straight in the chair. His hands have a death grip on his knees. "How many times?

Buried deep inside him, the panic attack that had begun when he opened his mouth to confess is throwing itself wildly against the walls of his heart. It's a repeated thump, thump, that Tim wishes would just stop. He thinks, in the confines of those walls, that 'how many' doesn't

seem like the correct follow up question.

“Twenty,” He answers anyway.

“Oh Tim,” Dick says, and Tim flinches.

Dick said that exact same thing, the exact same way when Tim was panting and wild eyed and insisting that Bruce was alive. Dick had said it when Stephanie had broken up with him, when he’d walked in on Tim taking pictures of her out of the frames in his room. He’d said ‘oh Tim’ in that painfully pitiful way, when Tim came home from visiting his Dad in the hospital and later when he was looking down at his coffin at the funeral.

It made Tim’s skin itch. Nothing good ever happened when Dick said it that way, when he deliberately chafed against Tim’s ability to handle himself. Tim doesn’t have the energy right now to fight whatever is going to happen next though. He feels like maybe, if he looks close enough, that shine will come back to Dick’s eyes. He’s hoping against hope that the Dick that used to grin down at him from power lines is going to come back and hold him for a moment.

“Are you sore?” Dick asks, and Tim nods because it is sore, and because there was a good month where Dick had walked around swearing he would have Jasons’s head for beating Tim near to death, before he forgave him.

“Okay, let's put something on it then, make you feel better?” Dick says, standing up in an abrupt motion that makes Tim eye him warily as he paces back and forth in front of him. “Cooling lotion maybe?” Dick nods to himself and ducks into his ensuite, not bothering to look at Tim for any kind of confirmation, which is lucky because Tim can’t help but tense up so completely that his shoulders are near his ears.

Even the thought of it, of reaching back to touch the inflamed skin with his own hands, is depraved. Standing in Dick’s bathroom with his pants around his ankles, twisting to see his own backside in the mirror, Dick waiting outside and knocking kindly every few minutes to inquire if he needed any help or if he was done. Having to look at it, see just how hard Jason hit, see and re-live the moment of palm meeting asscheek.

Tim would honestly rather die, his face is heating up at the thought of it, he probably matches his abused ass at this point. Tim just wants the night to be over already. There’s a naive part of him that thinks that all of his problems will melt away in the daylight.

“Ah ha!” Dick bursts out of the bathroom with a grin, a tube held aloft in one hand. “Found it!”

Tim holds a hand out, preparing himself to get up and stand in the bathroom for ten minutes until Dick is appeased and then repent for his deception by spending the night with Dick’s octopus arms wrapped around him. Instead he watches as Dick sets the tube on his desk.

“Let’s get you out of those clothes,” Dick says, airy and light, as if this is something he says to Tim on the regular. His hands are on his hips, a comical stance of readiness. “It's probably best if you just strip completely, that way we don’t have to bunch anything up or stain your old stuff.”

“What?” Tim’s outstretched hand drops and he ends up fingering the bottom of his t-shirt.

Dick’s eyebrows scrunch down in a convincing parody of confusion, but his bottom lip keeps twitching. It’s the same tell he’s had for the five years that Tim has known him. It always gives away when Dick is up to no good. The first time Tim had seen it was moments before Bruce had pulled out a Batsuit covered in glitter.

“You don’t want me to accidentally get lotion on your shirt do you?” Dick tilts his head to the side, his hair falling charmingly around his eyes.

“Why would you have the lotion?” Tim hasn’t felt this confused since his childhood, since his parents' nonsensical excuses about why they were gone all the time. Since he was constantly surrounded by subterfuge that his child mind refused to pick apart. “I’ll just go put it on in the bathroom and then-” Tim falters at Dick’s increasingly disappointed expression, “then we can go to bed and- cuddle?”

Dick sighs, a long and drawn out exhale that brushes right up against Tim’s fraying nerves. “Tim as much as I would love to skip to the cuddling part we both know that you won’t be as thorough as you should be. The only way that you’ll actually start to feel better is if someone looks after you like they actually care about your well being, which you won’t do.”

Tim bites his lip, because fighting on this won’t go well for him. Not with the memory of Dick carrying him out of the tower fresh in both their minds and not with Tim’s spotty track record.

Dick holds out his hands in a placating gesture, as if he can sense

Tim's mounting helplessness. Perhaps the expression is spilling onto his face, Tim doesn't feel like turning towards the mirror to check. "Okay, you can keep your shirt on as long as the pants and underwear come off so that I can actually see all the damage."

Tim just nods, his tongue stuck to the roof of his mouth. Dick snaps his fingers, "Let me lay a towel down, actually, because I don't want the lotion on my sheets either, and then you can lay down."

He stands when Dick approaches the bed with two towels folded over his arms. His butt stings when he stands up, which has always been annoying to Tim. Why do things have to hurt even when they aren't being pressed on?

When the towels are laid out Dick gestures downward with two of his fingers, trying to urge Tim to drop his pants while he busies himself with the cooling lotion tube on the desk. Tim, knowing that Dick won't see the point in turning around, now has to decide if he's going to turn his back to Dick or stare him dead on as he pantses himself. The issue is that usually he would just turn his back, but his backside is much more incriminating than it usually is, Dick will be able to see all of the marks that Jason has left on him as soon as Tim lowers his sweats beyond the first curve of an asscheek. Somehow the thought of a slow reveal, of Dick watching as the red skin is unveiled, is more excruciating than Dick seeing Tim's recent grooming habits.

He pulls down his pants and underwear in one go and then maneuvers himself face down on the bed, hitching his shirt up enough that it won't possibly be in Dick's way, stupidly grateful for the feel of the cotton on his shoulders. It's better than being naked.

The click of the lotion tube's lid closing is all the warning that Tim gets before the bed shifts when Dick plants a knee close to Tim's thigh. Tim cranes his head back and sees Dick with his hands in front of him, a thin sheen of lotion covering them, and then Dick slings his other leg over Tim's, so that he's kneeling over the pale hollows that make up the underside of Tim's knees.

"It's gonna feel really cold at first," Dick says, as if Tim hasn't used cooling lotion before, as if he's a first time victim in the emergency room and needs everything explained to him. "But try to stay still for me Timmy, I don't wanna accidentally push too hard because you're not where I expect you to be."

Tim stays quiet, because he's already agreed to this. He's already

nodded his accent and to try to protest now would be like trying to change the rules to a game when it's not going your way. Tim was never one to do that as a child and he wasn't about to start now. When Tim agreed to something, he at least saw it through until the end.

Dick's hands are big. Tim has thought it before, but when they land on his ass to cup both of his red, inflamed cheeks the thought is pushed to the forefront of his mind. Jason's hands had been fast, there and gone, always moving. Tim didn't really get a read on their size in comparison to his body, even if intellectually, they were probably even wider and weightier than Dicks. In contrast, Dick doesn't move his hands at all, for upwards of thirty seconds after he gently settles them on Tim's skin.

Two shocks of cold, slowly growing warm with their combined body heat. When he does start to move his hands Tim can't deny that it does… feel good. The cream is reducing the built up heat in his skin already and Dick is gentle with his movements, enough so that there's barely any pain from friction. Tim settles, just slightly relaxing and starting to bring his arms up so that they can pillow his face.

This is a mistake.

"Tim," Dick says warningly, and his hands still on Tim's body at the same time that Tim freezes. "Didn't I ask you to stay still?"

"I was just moving my arms," Tim says, almost snaps something biting and cold at Dick, like the cooling lotion, until he remembers the patterns he's managed to scrape together. He says, "I'm sorry," instead. He leaves his arms where they are.

Dick hums. The hands move away and the click of the bottle sounds again. This time Dick's hands land on either side of his waist, cold and firm and grasping, before slickly moving down towards the skin that actually needs his attention.

Tim can't help the sigh that leaves him, the tension that had gathered at Dick's reprimand leaking out of his body at the pure relief that follows the next swipe of cooling lotion against his fevered skin. But as Dick's hands drift lower and lower, over the tops of his cheeks and then at the delicate skin just under the crease of his ass, Tim can't help but squirm.

"Stay still, sweetheart," Dick says, but he doesn't understand that his hands are cold and that they are touching Tim everywhere. Tim gets

lost in the touches, as they wrap around his body like an all consuming presence. Dick's slick hands bring relief to his overly warm skin, but they also slide chilled and sure to spots Jason hadn't touched, new territory without Jason's scalding mark, now going cold from Dick's ministrations. It was a riot of contrasting sensations. His but still achy and warm, and the areas around it, where Dick gently rubbed cooling lotion, overly sensitive and chilled. Tim's hips, the outside of his knees, his calves all prickle in the air when Dick's hands leave.

Dick shuffles off of the bed at some point, leaning over Tim's side and just, spreading. He goes back for the lotion often, and he's just layering and layering the stuff over almost the entirety of Tim's lower half. His hand moves over places that Tim is pretty sure he's never been touched so firmly and thoroughly before: the middle of his back, the inside of his thigh, the sole of his foot.

Dick isn't even massaging, he's just- Tim squirms again when Dick's slick fingers smooth over the curve of Tim's waist, hands sliding in, until his fingers are wedged between Tim's body and the towel, fingertips nearly touching underneath Tim - he's just touching.

"Tim," Dick says warningly, hands sliding down so that some lotion gets onto the front of Tim's thighs.

"I'm trying," Tim says, because he is trying to stay still, it's just so difficult.

"I can help you if you want?" Dick says, and that cloying feeling is back. Dick hasn't started to rub any of the lotion in, just keeps running his hands lightly up and down Tim's body, thickening the layer of cold cream until Tim feels close to shivering.

"I can stay still," Tim promises.

Dick's hands disappear from his body, and Tim has one single moment of pure dread similar to when he woke up only hours ago in his room, wet and scared. Then Dick's fingers flit against his ribs, and Tim breaks his promise immediately, squirming to get away from his older brother's wiggling fingers.

"Oh, really?" Dick asks, smug.

"I- I could if you didn't tickle me that's," Tim gasps as Dick's fingers dig under his armpits, slick and teasing, barreling right past the t-shirt that's now perversely bunched up so that most, if not all of his back is

exposed, “cheating.”

“Baby, I’m going to have to put my hands there if I’m doing a proper job of this.” Dick says. Tim heartily disagrees, and would voice this disagreement if Dick weren’t still wiggling his lith fingers at all of Tim’s ticklish places. “You’re poor little booty looks so sore and I just know you don’t moisturize enough as it is. This is for your own good.” Dick says.

“This really isn't necessary, Dick.” Tim gasps, close to turning over so that he can kick at Dick, but weary of the rough texture of the towel and Dick’s response.

Dick hums in a clearly disagreeing tone. “Stay there, I’ll get something to help you.”

Tim breaths out a sigh of relief as Dick’s hands disappear from his skin. A moment of respite that’s short lived when Dick reappears at his side, a loop of smooth black cord quickly being double wrapped around his right wrist.

“I- rope?” Tim tries to jerk his wrist away but Dick has carefully stayed away from applying lotion to any part of Tim’s arms, and his suddenly dry hand’s grip is strong and sure. “Dick?”

“This will help you keep still.”

This will teach you good posture, his etiquette teacher said, tying a scarf around Tim’s shoulders to restrain him to the chair. It’s for your own good.

Tim struggles despite himself. He has never liked being tied down.

Dick’s grip turns bruising at Tim’s first sign of resistance, and before he can get his left hand up underneath himself, the right one Dick has caught held fast gets pulled up, rope going taunt as Dick works on typing Tim up to the bedposts.

Tim pulls at it, and finding it secure, tries to get his knees up underneath himself, if he can just- not be laying down- not be so at Dick’s mercy then maybe Dick will listen.

“Dick,” He says, struggling against the hand that wraps around his right ankle and pulls. But it’s an odd angle and Tim is able to keep trying. “Dick please I don’t want-”

Dick has both hands around his ankle now, and he pulls and Tim's face slams into the pillow. "It's not about wants, Tim," Dick tells him and now there's rope around Tim's ankle Tim's ankle and Tim only barely gets a kick towards him with the opposite leg before that one is being pinned beneath Dick's thigh. "It's about needs."

Shortly after, both feet secured, quickly followed by Tim's left hand, which he's been trying to use to locate a loose point in the knot on his right, to no avail.

It's instinct to test the restraints after that, Tim pulls on the ropes that now bind each of his limbs to one of the bed posts, twists his fingers to attempt to feel out the knots. The knot work is strong and damningly clever. No matter how much Tim bends his fingers he can't seem to find any point to pick at in the knot. He's trapped. His breathing speeds up as he pulls harder, the bed creaks in protest.

"Stop that." Dick's hands press down onto Tim's back, pushing the air out of his lungs, before he disappears again.

Tim looks over his shoulder as best he can, straining and trying to regain his breath, to see Dick digging around in a desk drawer. When he turns back, he's holding scissors.

"Dick-" Tim says, not even sure what he's going to say. Is he going to plead again? Maybe ask Dick why he has scissors even though it's clear he'll find out momentarily? Is he going to start crying? Tim doesn't know because Dick pushes his face into the pillow with his free hand when he reaches Tim, and then he gently pushes up the hair on the back of Tim's neck. Cupping the curve of Tim's skull and holding the hair up.

"Don't move too much Tim," Dick says, as cold metal touches Tim's upper back, "These aren't medical scissors so I could poke you if you're not careful."

"I-" Tim swallows, "Dick, I thought we said I could keep my shirt on?"

Dick hums and Tim hears the distinct sound of cloth being cut as Dick makes the first snip through his rucked up shirt, the scissors have to be wickedly sharp to get through bunched up fabric like that.

"Baby," and Tim stiffens as much as he can with a sharp object at his back and his limbs splayed out, at the tone of Dick's voice. It's sickly sweet again, condescending as a pre peeled clementine. The scissors move forward and another cut echoes in his ears. "I've already seen all

of this, there's no need to be embarrassed."

"Dick that's not-" Tim cuts himself off when another cut brings the scissors right up against the dip in his shoulder blades. The tip seems to dig warningly into his skin, walking the tightrope between a caress and a cut.

"I figure," Dick says, lightening the pressure of the scissors, "that I might as well give you a proper massage while you're under me. You do a good job at stretching most of the time but you don't usually bother with any kind of sports massage like the rest of us. This kind of treatment can be important every now and then."

Dick makes the final cut at Tim's neckline, the hand holding his head down soothing the hair further out of the way. The crisp sound causes a shiver to race down Tim's back, goosebumps quickly following. "And I can't do that if you have this on," Dick chirps, then he makes quick work of the sleeves and forces Tim's spine into a curve with a quick arm wedged under Tim's chest to get the shirt out from under him.

The click of the lotion tube being opened in the room feels like a gunshot, or like an arrow hitting the wall just above Tim's head. Dick's hands are back again and Tim bites his lip as they start moving around, rubbing and kneading the lotion into his skin. Dick straddles him again, pushing down harshly on the sore parts of Tim's shoulders. "Much better, Timmy. We'll be done really soon if you just keep still like this."

It's a kind of agony Tim's never experienced before. It doesn't hurt beyond the slight pain where he had pulled at his bounds too tightly but Tim has never felt the way that he does right now, all mixed up and confused and helpless.

With rouges, or traps set by the enemy, it was easy to work through the pain, discomfort, embarrassment, because it was rarely personal. Even if they insisted it was, that you were their favorite or their one true foe, it wasn't really about you, it's always about them.

Dick's hands, and the way that they ground Tim into the physical world, make this undeniably about Tim. And Dick's hands, the familiar shape of the callouses, the short nails, the pronounced knuckles that tenderly massage the cooling lotion into his biceps it all feels just a little bit like a betrayal.

Tim can't leave. Tim can't leave because he's tied to his big brother's

bed, stark naked. Tim can't leave because he doesn't know how to fit what's happening in with the picture of Dick Grayson that he's had in his head since he was five years old. Tim can't leave. Tim can't-

Dick's hands rub gentle circles into his lower back, decreasing in pressure now that he's approaching the area where Tim is battered and bruised and sensitive. His palms sweep lightly over Tim's cheeks and the outside of his hips. The upper part of his thighs and then, deeper. Dick's fingers curl into the space between Tim's legs, smoothing lotion down his inner thighs and just brushing against the flesh of Tim's cunt.

Tim squeaks in surprise, his mental spiral turning into a steep slope that tumbles him into panic. He jolts up the bed, away from Dick's fingers. "Dick?"

The fingers follow after him though, and Tim startles as the touch turns firmer. "Dick, Dick what are you doing that's-" Tim chokes, not used to having to voice things like this aloud. Kon always jokes that Tim is a prude, and the truth is that he's not far from the truth. It's hard to really learn about the carnal side of things when your parents are either gone or emotionally withdrawn and you spend most of your teen years locked up with cold cases and word puzzles. "You're touching my-"

"Ah," Dick says, fingers not relenting in the slightest, just moving up and digging in which is worse actually, he's knuckle deep in Tim's asscrack, and almost at- "just making sure I get all the crevices."

Tim lets out a shaky breath when Dick's fingers smear lotion over his asshole, turning his face so that his nose is pushed into the pillow, making full breaths difficult and heavy. He closes his eyes tightly and bites his lip.

It's intense. It's like having someone's fingers on an open wound, or in your mouth, or so close to your eye that you can see each swirl of the fingerprint and can't help the instinctive blinks that burn the sight onto the inside of your eyelids. Dick just presses, not to slip inside, but to caress, in these slow circling and up and down movements that make Tim press his face harder into the pillow, that makes his fists clench and toes curl. No one has ever-

Dick's fingers wander lower again, and Tim jerks his head to the side, "Stop, Dick, stop, please, stop, I-"

"Just one pass over Tim," Dick says placatingly, "I'm trying to be

throughout here."

Tim's breaths increase in tempo until he's sure his back is rising and falling like a tremble rather than an inhale. Dick's fingers make a wide swipe over the lips of his cunt, and Tim is wet. Not because of the lotion but because he's always been sensitive to having his thighs touched and because despite how much he disliked Dick putting moisturizer on his asshole it had felt good.

And Dick is sure to say something. With the amount of experience he has, Tim's slight arousal is probably a glaring sign. Dick will say something and Tim will have to explain that- that what? He got turned on by his brother touching him somewhere no one else has ever touched? That he didn't know he might be into assplay before now? That he doesn't really masturbate that much is all- so he has a hair pin trigger?

Dick's hand pulls away after a twitch of one of his fingers that presses it just slightly inside of Tim.

"All done!" Dick chirps, giving Tim the lightest possible pat on the butt before climbing off of him.

Tim is surrounded by him still, his touch, his smell, the pillow is his and it is what Tim is drawing his breaths through. Everything around him is Dick, he's surrounded. He's underwater. Tim heaves two deep breaths that feel like liquid, like flooded lungs and the promise of choking, and then he feels a poke at his temple.

He turns his head sluggishly to look at Dick. He feels like he does after a near miss, when a pullet grazes close to something vital, or a bruise is deeply black enough to show that it nearly split skin. He feels this sick and disgusting relief that's overshadowed by the fast pace of an adrenaline spiked heart.

"Don't you feel better," Dick asks him, crouched low by the side of the bed so that Tim can see his face.

"Yes," Tim says dutifully from underneath all of the water and the touch and the smells. "Yes, thank you." Jason had liked it when Tim thanked him, Tim is pretty sure.

"Good boy," Dick says, "Now, I want to untie you, I really do. But you tried to run away earlier and if you can get away from Jason I'm sure you could get away from me," he pets Tim's hair as he says this, as if that can bring Tim some kind of comfort in the moment. "So these are

just going to have to stay until the morning."

"What?" Tim blurts out, "Dick, no, please? I'll stay, I promise Dick-" he's begging Dick again. "Anything, anything, please just let me out?"

"You shouldn't make promises you can't keep, baby."

"I can keep it-"

"You couldn't stay still." Dick says patently, like a mother reasoning to a child why they can't come along to the grocery store. "We can't trust you not to run off."

"Dick-"

"Enough." Dick rises from his crouch, and Tim squeezes his eyes shut. Tears, again. Tim hasn't cried this much in years. He feels like a leaky faucet. Or like everything that he's breathed in is fighting its way back out, an oceanic tide made up of touch and rope and Dick Grayson's pine scented shampoo. There's a soft sound, an adjustment of fabric, but when Tim snaps his eyes open it's just to see Dick hovering in the doorway, fingertips poised over the light switch.

"I'll sleep on the couch." Dick says. "Someone will come wake you up in the morning and set you loose."

"Dick, at least- can you-" Tim gropes for something, anything that would convince Dick and almost swallows his own tongue in mortification. "Will you tuck me in?"

Dick's eyes light up and he coos, "Oh sweetheart, of course I can't believe I would have left you here without a blanket." There's a thwip of a blanket being snapped out, and a rush of cold air over Tim's back before a blanket settles over his naked body, giving him an illusion of privacy. Dick's hands adjust the edges, making sure it reaches as far as it can up on Tim's extended arms and tucking it so that it doesn't fall too far over his head. "Is that better? Sorry I can't really move the towels."

Tim repeats, "Thank you," feeling distinctly adrift.

"Night Night Timmy," Dick says. The lights click off and Tim waits only ten minutes before he lets himself cry.

Chapter End Notes

thanks for reading!!! please leave a comment and let me know what you thought! I'm slightly worried that the second chapter won't hold up in comparison to the first so if all of the lovely readers could tell me otherwise that would be fantastic :D

I'll be super honest! It'll probably be a while until chapter three comes out, I've only written a few paragraphs for it so far and I'm also anticipating it having to be quite long for what I have in mind which will also make the wait longer... but yeah! thanks for reading and please leave me a comment and let me know if there's anything specific you're secretly hoping to see before the fic wraps up!

for those interested here are links to the artifacts that tim mentions in this chapter (i don't know how to make links work so you'll have to copy and paste):
https://statemuseum.arizona.edu/online-exhibit/curators-choice/chinese-tea-cup
https://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/passion-for-jade/exhibition-objects

a commenter asked for some recommendations of things that feel similar to this fic so I thought i would rec you guys some of my fav and more depraved Tim fics that I took some inspiration from! hopefully this will help yall feel better about the wait:

frostbite by vestal

Building Blocks by micdropbam (this one is a series)

if i could save time in a bottle by DairyFarmer

Before I met you / I didn't have anything to think about. by giganoodle (one of my top fics of all time honestly, got me into poetry)

this is just a few I could find quickly/kinda had in my brain off the top of my head!

End Notes

I have maybe half of the second chapter written, it includes a spanking scene! So please let me know if you would like to read it by telling me what you liked about this chapter! Comments fuel me!! If you have any recommendations for fics that are similar to this I would also appreciate those cuz I feel like I've read most of the fics that have the same vibe, which is why I had to write my own I guess lol.

Thanks for reading!!!

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!